

K



"This Booke is mine.

Irene Andrews:

And I yt Loos And you yt find,
I pray you hartely to Be so
kynnd, that you will take A Letel
payhe to see my Booke Brothe
home AGayne"

Irene W. Andrews

Chase Hotel

St Louis

Dec' 34

LONDON CLUBS

VOLUME TWO



A DINNER OF THE DILETTANTI SOCIETY AT THE THATCHED HOUSE.

From a drawing by T. H. Shepherd.

LONDON CLUBS

Their History and Treasures

BY

RALPH NEVILL

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VOLUME TWO

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CHAPTER V

CHANGES IN CLUB LIFE AND WAYS

AMONGST the changes which, during the last thirty years, have transformed the West End of London, one of the most salient has been the great increase in the number of clubs. Palatial buildings, each capable of accommodating hundreds of members, now occupy a very great portion of Pall Mall and Piccadilly. Although in other days the latter was by no means a very clubbable thoroughfare, it now, at one end at least, consists largely of clubs, most of them, however, differing widely from those of an older age.

The original conception of a London club was a retreat to which West End men might betake themselves, certain that the troubles and worries of the outside world would not follow into a building which they regarded as a temple of dignified seclusion and repose. Perhaps the best description of a club as it existed in former days was that given by a witty Bishop, who defined it as a place "where women ceased from troubling and the weary were at rest." Another amusing definition was that once given by George Augustus Sala. "A club," said he, "is a weapon used by savages to keep the white woman at a distance."

A club should certainly form a safe retreat from the cares of the world, but it need not necessarily be a shrine of crystallized selfishness.

The aim of club-life should be a sort of defensive alliance tacitly concluded between a number of individuals, all moving in the same sphere of life, against the troubles and perturbations by which humanity is assailed. The fundamental charter of the perfect club ought to be an unassuming, unobtrusive, and unenvious equality.

Within the last twenty-five years or so the spirit of London club-life has entirely changed ; the old-fashioned club-man, whose whole life was bound up with one or other of these institutions, is now, indeed, practically extinct. In the days when the type in question was a feature of the West End, the great majority of men living in that quarter of London had no occupation, or, if they had one, it was of such an easy and accommodating kind as to allow them plenty of spare time for lounging. According to a modern estimate, however, few of the old club-men were rich. The majority usually possessed from four to eight hundred a year, which in the past was considered a comfortable enough income for a bachelor. Living in rooms—a sitting-room and bedroom of a very unluxurious kind, compared with the bachelor flats of to-day—the life of a confirmed frequenter of clubland was uneventful but easy. As a rule, he got up late and lounged about till lunch-time, when he would betake himself to his favourite resort, and remain there till dinner, perhaps indulging in a leisurely stroll in the afternoon. About

seven he would return to his rooms, dress, and then go back to his club to dine, after which, except when he went to a party or theatre, he would sit with congenial spirits, often till the small-hours of the morning, a good deal of brandy and soda being incidentally consumed. It must be remembered that there were fewer amusements in those days—no motors, no golf, no restaurants, few theatres, and no palatial music-halls; also, the City had not yet begun to exercise its fascinating and too often costly spell over the inhabitants of the West End of the town.

Strange-looking customers were some of the clubmen of that bygone day—old fogies with buff waistcoats, blue coats, and brass buttons; heavy swells with peg-top trousers and long, drooping whiskers; horsy-looking characters with spurs and bespattered riding-boots. No wonder that in a description of a certain club decorated with trophies of the chase there appeared the statement that “many old beasts of members might be seen in the hall.” This, of course, arose through the carelessness of a printer.

To realize what most of the old-fashioned West End club-men were like, one has only to turn to the pages of Captain Gronow’s “Reminiscences.” Writing in 1866, Captain Gronow says :

“How insufferably odious, with a few brilliant exceptions, were the dandies of forty years ago! They were generally middle-aged, some even elderly men, had large appetites, gambled freely, and had no luck; and why they arrogated to themselves the right of setting up their fancied superiority on a self-raised pedestal, and despising their betters,

Heaven only knows. They hated everybody and abused everybody, and would sit together in White's bow-window or the pit-boxes at the Opera. They swore a good deal, never laughed, had their own particular slang, looked hazy after dinner, and had most of them been patronized at one time or other by Brummell or the Prince Regent."

The old-fashioned club-man had comparatively few interests, and even those were of a comparatively narrow kind. His life, indeed, was centred in his club, which often seemed to him the very centre and pivot of the universe.

As compared with those of to-day, the clubs of the past were very primitive in their arrangements, though not a few had that peculiar atmosphere of old-world comfort which is generally lacking in our more hurried and strenuous existence. The clubs of the past were almost without exception sombre and occasionally dingy resorts, entirely devoid of bright-coloured decorations, whilst very few prints or pictures adorned their walls.

When modern improvements were first suggested in clubs, most of the old-fashioned members fought strenuously against them. The introduction of the electric light, for instance, was bitterly opposed; whilst the telephone seemed to not a few of the older generation an attempt to introduce mercantile outposts into the very heart of clubland. The old club-men at first hated, and afterwards feared, the encroachments of business methods into their kingdom. In the heyday of their sway, indeed, few connected with commerce or the City had much chance of being elected to a West End club, and

it was only in the seventies of the last century that a few determined scouts contrived to force an entry into the portals through which the vast army of stockbrokers and the like have since surged. At heart the old club-men probably believed that it was undignified for a gentleman to enter any but certain recognized professions, such as the army, navy, or diplomatic service; and the West End was still permeated by the ideas of another age which had only just passed away.

Gradually, as a new and entirely different generation came to the front, the aristocratic traditions which had dominated West End life were discarded, and another kind of club-man began to make his influence felt.

Members of energetic temperament found the atmosphere of idle lassitude which hung about some West End clubs so stifling that a number of them, filled with a desire for exercise, formed what they called a "walking society." One of their favourite excursions was to St. Albans, which they called their halfway house, and to this town they walked backwards and forwards to dinner every Thursday.

Now that the old-fashioned club-man has disappeared, a glance at his ways may not be out of place. Generally a bachelor of the most confirmed kind, his whole life centred in his club, to which he made it a habit to go every day at the same hour, and when possible occupy the same chair, which in course of time was accorded to him as a sort of right.

Often an old-fashioned beau, he was as a rule rather a hard, selfish man, provided by his club

with all that he required. Not a few men of this type declined to dine out, because they said they got a better dinner at the club for some ten or twelve shillings than at the best houses in town. "Why," inquired one of them, "should I bore myself with dull society when I can have the comfortable ease of the smoking-room? If I want to be amused, I go to the theatre; if I want to read, I go to the library. What have I to do with society," he would ask, with a sneer—"I who have no money, and not even a pretty wife?" Such an individual was perfectly content with existence. Quiet, comfort, good living, freedom from responsibility and anxiety, were the great objects of his life, "and, begad, you don't get that by marriage," he would remark.

The confirmed club-man of to-day is, perhaps, a shade less cynical, but a variation of the old type still exists, and in most West End clubs, especially those of an old-fashioned sort, there is to be found some member who is generally recognized as an institution of the place.

Such a man is not infrequently the terror of the club servants, upon whom he is ever ready to pounce when there arises the least cause for complaint. He backs his bill remorselessly if the dish which is down for eight o'clock appears a quarter of an hour late, or if the wine-butler makes a mistake about the vintage that is ordered, or the waiter at his table is not perfect in his duties. He knows to a day when everything is in season, and woe betide the steward if at the earliest moment there is no caviare, sufficient supply of plovers' eggs, asparagus, green peas, or new

potatoes. He can tell the exact price of most things, and instantly checks any attempt on the part of the club to overcharge. He is the great authority on club discipline and club etiquette. Matters outside the club, however, he views with more or less indifference. Talk to him of some awful disaster, of some terrible commercial failure, provided he be not affected by it, of some great national loss, of the death of some great man, and his interest will hardly be excited ; but tell him that an excellent club cook has given notice, or that there has been a "row" between certain members on a difference of opinion in the committee, and you will at once find him an interested and attentive listener.

His daily life is regulated by habits which have gradually crystallized into an almost undeviating monotony.

He likes to read the same newspaper in the same chair in the same place, to write his letters at the same table, to lunch at the same time, and to have his dinner served by the same waiter at the same hour in the same corner of the coffee-room. In such matters he is the strictest and most staunch of Conservatives. Never was there a man whom it is more easy to find, for one knows the hour to a moment when he takes his daily stroll, when he smokes his first cigar, when he lunches, dines, writes his letters, reads, and goes through the programme of his thoroughly selfish but not uncomfortable life. He cares little for society, and, with the exception of running down for an occasional visit to some country-house (where he is certain of the cook), or going to the Riviera for a fortnight, seldom leaves

town. The club is his home, and at heart he dislikes leaving its walls. Unlike the old-fashioned club-man, however, he is not unaffable to new members or strangers, and is fully alive to the increased comfort to be obtained from any modern improvement.

The confirmed frequenter of clubs knows everything that is going on, and imparts such information as he feels inclined to give with none of the mystery and importance of semi-ignorance, but simply and naturally. He knows what young women are going to the altar, and what young men are going to the dogs ; what people have been prevented from going to Court, and what spendthrifts are about to be forced to go through another. He is well acquainted with the latest good stories about town, and explains mysterious floating gossip as to meditated divorces or hushed-up scandals. As a matter of fact, his conversation is generally amusing, and occasionally instructive.

The life of such a man, as has been said, is centred in his club, and he sees members come and go, hears of their prosperity or ruin, marriages or deaths, with imperturbable equanimity ; indeed, it would require an invasion or an earthquake to make him effect any change in his habits.

So he lunches and dines, dines and lunches, till the sands of the hourglass have run out, and the moment comes for him to enter that great club of which all humanity must perforce become members.

A few questions will be asked in the club as to his end, his fortune or lack of fortune ; his witticisms

will linger for a while, and his good or bad points be discussed ; but in a year or so he will become as completely forgotten as if he had never been.

As London clubs began to multiply, their gradual increase drew away most of the sporting men from the old hostelries which at one time it had been the fashion to frequent. Theodore Hook alluded to this in some humorous lines :

“ If any man loves comfort, and has little cash to buy it, he
Should get into a crowded club—a most select society ;
While solitude and mutton cutlets serve *infelix uxor*, he
May have his club (like Hercules), and revel there in
luxury.

“ Yes, clubs knock houses on the head ; e’en Hatchett’s can’t
demolish them ;

Joy grieves to see their magnitude, and Long longs to
abolish them.

The inns are out ; hotels for single men scarce can keep
alive on it ;

While none but houses that are in the family way thrive
on it.”

Since those days clubs have multiplied enormously ; indeed, almost every profession, every pastime, and every point of view has its club. Whilst most of these institutions are frankly mundane in their aims, a few are very solemn in tone. At one club, for instance, morning and evening prayers are read every day. The club in question was founded for men of very Evangelical views, some of whom, it was wickedly said, were so devout as to demand that a club rule should be passed prohibiting members from entering the coffee-room unless in a “ state of grace.” Of late years, however, a less severe tone has prevailed amongst its members, many of whom are distinguished men.

Sixty years ago the fact of club membership implied some social position or distinction on the part of the individual. White's, Brooks's, Boodle's, Arthur's, and a few other establishments, constituted really exclusive clubland, and to be elected to them was a matter of no little difficulty. A man of obscure birth, or one unknown to the committee, would have been sure of being blackballed. Clubs were then filled by those who belonged either to the same political party or the same fashionable coterie, the members of which were all more or less known to each other. The Tory patrician belonged to White's; the Whig politician of old family was a member of Brooks's; the country gentleman put his name down at Boodle's or Arthur's; the distinguished lawyer, divine, or man of letters, became a member of the Athenæum; and the soldier, who was a field officer, of the United Service. The membership of such clubs constituted an exclusive circle.

A club was a place in which men wrote letters and met their friends. Beyond being a comfortable lounge, it was of little service to its members.

Many tacitly recognized conventions prevailed in connection with club-life. For instance, it was not then at all the thing to raise one's hat to a lady whom one knew, should she pass the club window. A great many members lunched in the coffee-room with their hats on, whilst in certain clubs evening dress at dinner was obligatory. Some clubs, including Boodle's, even to-day set aside a small apartment, separate from the regular dining-room, for members who prefer to dine in day clothes.

Formerly, it should be added, hats were far more

generally worn in clubs than is now the case. In some it was the traditional custom to wear them at all times and in all parts of the house. At the old "Rag," the practice was said to have survived from the time when the club-house was so cheerless and the funds so limited that the management economized coals, for which reason the members were at great pains to keep themselves warm.

In his own club a man used to be considered as having entirely cut himself off from communication with the outside world, and acknowledging people from the windows by a bow or nod was then quite contrary to club usage, which prescribed an Olympian stare.

At certain of the older clubs a few customs, dating back to the eighteenth century, were up to quite recently still in vogue.

At Arthur's, Boodle's, White's,* and, I think, Brooks's, for instance, change was given in washed silver. The money was first plunged in hot water and cleaned, after which it was placed in a wash-leather bag; this was whirled round in the air at the end of a short cord till all the coins contained in it were dry.

The custom of giving washed silver lasted latest at Arthur's, where it was only abandoned a few years ago. It seems a pity that such a cleanly and hygienic custom should have fallen into disuse.

Another old custom was the house dinner, where members dined together. At White's and Boodle's this function used to be a great feature—highly

* The water from the old well in the courtyard here was supposed to be particularly excellent and healthy, and many members made a daily practice of drinking a glass of it.

appreciated by some of the older, more stingy, or impecunious members. Immemorial custom prescribed that the first four members who put their names down as diners should have dinner "free of cost," and a certain gang of old gentlemen used to make a regular practice of being in these club-houses in good time to inscribe their names.

Wine, of course, had to be paid for, but the most economical contented themselves with table-beer. There was great consternation amongst the "fraternity of free feeders" when, during the early seventies of the last century, these house dinners were abolished.

Some few clubs still retain the snuff-box which once figured on the mantelpiece of every club. In most, however, it has disappeared. Snuff-taking has become obsolete since the triumph of the cigarette—perhaps a more pernicious habit.

The question of smoking has frequently caused great agitation in London clubs. In 1866, for instance, White's, where cigars had not been allowed at all till 1845, was much perturbed concerning tobacco, some of the younger members wishing to be allowed to smoke in the drawing-room, whilst the older ones bitterly opposed such a proposal. A general meeting was held to decide the question, when a number of old gentlemen who had not been seen in the club for years made their appearance, stoutly determined to resist the proposed desecration. "Where do all these old fossils come from?" inquired a member. "From Kensal Green," was Mr. Alfred Montgomery's reply. "Their hearses, I understand, are waiting to take them back there."

The non-smoking party triumphed, and as an indirect result was founded the Marlborough Club, where, for the first time in the history of West End Clubland, smoking, except in the dining-room, was everywhere allowed.

As a matter of fact, the restrictions as to smoking which still prevail in a number of old-fashioned clubs are for the most part out of date and absurd. At the present time people smoke in ladies' boudoirs, and almost invariably in dining-rooms after dinner. The great restaurants, a large portion of whose clientèle consists of refined ladies, permit smoking everywhere.

Nevertheless, in a number of club morning-rooms, libraries, and sitting-rooms, the resort for the most part of a number of middle-aged men, often of a somewhat derelict-looking type, tobacco is entirely banned.

The whole thing is merely a perpetuation of an out-of-date prejudice. The regulations against smoking which prevail in different clubs clearly demonstrate the small foundation of reason which underlies such restrictions.

The Carlton allows smoking in its library; the Junior Carlton does not. The Conservative Club, on the other hand, has an excellent rule which permits members to smoke in the morning-room after a certain hour in the morning.

Regulations against smoking in libraries are particularly senseless, as tobacco smoke can have nothing but a beneficial effect upon books, which it has a tendency to preserve.

In old days clubs did not welcome strangers; indeed, it was said that if anyone not a member

should fall down in a fit at the door of one or two of the more exclusive clubs, he would be denied even a glass of water. A few clubs allowed visitors, but took care to extend only a cold welcome to them. As a matter of fact, they were usually treated like the members' dogs—they might be left in the hall under proper restraint, but access to any other part of the house, except, perhaps, some cheerless apartment kept as a strangers' dining-room, was forbidden. Of late years, however, all this has been changed except in a very few clubs, such as the Guards', which positively forbids any strangers to enter its doors. Only very recently has Arthur's admitted strangers to dine. The Carlton allows guests only to pass its threshold, but not to go beyond the great hall, and the Athenæum allots them a small room near the entrance, where members may interview their friends. The latter club also allows a member to give a formal dinner-party in the morning-room, converted for the time being into a house dining-room, and here as many as ten guests may be hospitably welcomed. The Travellers' permits strangers to dine, except during the Parliamentary season, whilst the Oxford and Cambridge Club allows six members to entertain two guests apiece. The Garrick is far more liberal, for here a member may introduce three friends to the strangers' coffee-room for dinner, or two for luncheon or supper. Members of this club may also give luncheon-parties to ladies on one day of the week.

As regards the admission of ladies to clubs, it is very doubtful if, according to the strict letter of the law, ladies can be excluded from any institution of

this sort which admits strangers, for there is no mention of sex in any book of club rules. Indeed, a member of a certain military club is said once to have brought his wife to dine, and defied the authorities by asking for the book of the rules, in which he triumphantly pointed out that there was no stipulation as to sex.

Not a few clubs in old days were anything but sociable places for young men, who, when elected, were often shy at frequenting them, on account of the stern looks which certain of the older members, who had their particular corners and chairs, were wont to cast at them. Gloomy abodes of misanthropic selfishness some of these clubs seem to have been, where sociability and conversation were at a considerable discount.

Dr. Johnson was probably the most staunch defender of clubs who ever lived; his reply to someone who was rather inclined to decry such institutions is historic. A gentleman venturing one day to say to the learned Doctor that he sometimes wondered at his condescending to attend a club, the latter replied: "Sir, the great chair of a full and pleasant town club is, perhaps, the throne of human felicity."

His, of course, was the day of literary clubs, more suited to the spirit of the eighteenth century than to that of to-day. In modern times most of the literary clubs founded for conversation have been complete failures. So much talking, and nothing said! Everyone failing, because everyone is attempting; in a word, nothing of the club feeling, which demands the postponement of our petty self-

loves to the general gratification, and strikes only in unison with the feelings and sentiments of all!

A good deal of wine was generally consumed during the symposiums which the great talkers of the past loved. At one meeting-place where a literary club was wont to meet, the landlord was said to keep a special kind of port expressly for such parties, which those who frequented the house christened "the philosopher's port." A cynic declared that in one respect it certainly merited its name, for a good deal of philosophy was necessary to swallow it.

Thackeray, unlike Dr. Johnson, was rather inclined to disparage clubs. Speaking of the town life of a past age, he said: "All that fuddling and boozing shortened the lives and enlarged the waistcoats of the men of that age. They spent many hours of the four-and-twenty, nearly a fourth part of each day, in clubs and coffee-houses, where they dined, drank, and smoked. Wit and news went by word of mouth; a journal of 1710 contained the very smallest portion of either the one or the other. The chiefs spoke; the faithful habitués sat around; strangers came to wonder and to listen. . . . The male society passed over their punch-bowls and tobacco-pipes almost as much time as ladies of that age spent over spadille and manille."

Tom Hood expressed an equally unfavourable view in 1838:

"One selfish course the Wretches keep;
They come at morning chimes;
To snatch a few short hours of sleep—
Rise—breakfast—read the *Times*—

Then take their hats, and post away,
Like Clerks or City scrubs,
And no one sees them all the day—
They live, eat, drink, at Clubs !”

Many women regarded such places as dens of iniquity. “I believe that mine will be the fate of Abel,” said a devoted wife to her husband one day. “How so ?” inquired the husband. “Because Abel was killed by a club, and your club will kill me if you continue to go to it every night.”

Dr. Johnson defined a club as “an assembly of uncertain fellows meeting amidst comfortable surroundings,” and in the earliest days, when the club was developing out of the coffee-house as a social institution, its chief attraction lay in the wit of its members and the similarity of their tastes and opinions. Members then were contented with a comparatively simple standard of comfort, and esteemed congenial companionship the best furniture a club could possess ; but with the lapse of years a different spirit began to prevail. In the luxurious palaces of to-day most of the members are very often unknown to one another ; such places are, in reality, rather luxurious restaurants and hotels than clubs.

Many clubs now have bedrooms for the use of members ; in a few instances these are let by the year. Such a convenience is highly appreciated, for to a bachelor the advantages of living in a club are very great. Here he may have all the comforts of a private house without its worries, in addition to which every species of modern convenience is at his command.

Latterly a good deal of attention has been devoted

to the decoration of club-houses generally, most of which now contain prints and pictures.

The present being a more or less luxurious age, modern club-men require more pleasing surroundings than their forbears, who asked little beyond comfortable chairs and blazing fires.

Until comparatively recent years, the interior of the great majority of West End clubs was somewhat bare, such attempts at decoration as existed being for the most part confined to feeble designs in stencil, whilst pictures and prints were either few in number or did not exist at all. The furniture was generally of mid-Victorian date—comfortable, though rather heavy in design.

At a certain number of clubs, wax candles were placed upon the dining-tables, and these were very necessary in the days when oil-lamps and gas were the best illuminants procurable. The light of the lamps was not unpleasant, but in some of the rooms lit by gas the heat was often perfectly intolerable.

As an instance of the persistence of club tradition, it may be added that even at the present time, when electricity floods most of the coffee-rooms with light, some clubs still retain the candles which were so useful in the past.

The growth of the club system undoubtedly effected a great revolution in the domestic life of men generally, and especially in that of the younger ones. Married men, accustomed to the refinement and luxury of a club, gradually imported many amenities into their homes, and endeavoured, so far as their means permitted, to reproduce some of the perfections of management as it is found in clubs.

It was, however, in the life of the bachelor that the introduction of this state of affairs caused the greatest change. The solitary lodgings and the tavern dinners were relegated to the limbo of the past. All he now needed was a bedroom, for the club provided him with the rest of his wants. It began to matter little in what dingy street or squalid quarter a man lodged, for the club was his address, and society inquired no further. He did not need to purchase an envelope or a sheet of note-paper throughout the year, for the club provided him with all the stationery he could possibly require. There was no longer any occasion for him to buy a book, a magazine, or newspaper, for in his club he would find a library such as few private houses could furnish, and in the morning-room every newspaper and weekly review that had a respectable circulation.

Here was to be found economy without privation for the man of modest means and small wants, whilst in some clubs even a confirmed sybarite could satisfy his tastes.

The excessively moderate scale of expenditure for which a man can live comfortably at many a club is highly attractive to the parsimonious.

A certain member, as well known for his economical way as for his vast wealth, made a study of living at the smallest possible cost in the several clubs to which he belonged. It was, for instance, his habit to take full advantage of the privileges to be obtained in return for table-money, and when he dined the table would be covered with pickle-bottles and other things included in such a charge. One

evening a fellow-member, noticing this, inquired of the steward the reason why such an array had been collected. "It's for a member, sir," was the reply, "who likes profusion."

The lover of profusion was especially noticeable on account of his unpolished boots, which stupid servants, as he said, were always wanting to wear out by blacking.

A member of several clubs, he once discovered, amongst the rules of a certain old-established one, an ancient and unrepealed rule which laid down that slices of cold ham were to be provided free for any members at their lunch. In high glee, he determined to profit by this, and before long the attention of the committee was called to the quick disappearance of ham after ham, which for a time had furnished a series of Gargantuan meals. The rule, of course, was at once abolished, and the parsimonious member betook himself elsewhere.

Very different in his habits was a witty old gourmet who was always urging the steward to procure luxuries in and out of season. He was especially fond of *pâté de foie gras*, and made that official promise to get a fine one from Strasbourg. This, however, was a long time in making its appearance; and after waiting a week or so, the lover of good things became impatient at the delay. Taking the man to task, he reminded him that delays are dangerous, to which the steward replied that he heard *pâtés* were not good that year. "Nonsense," was the rejoinder, "we will soon put that right. Depend upon it, it is only a false report that has been circulated by some geese."

The same member once had reason for much comical complaint in connection with a pâté which, in this case, had been sent him as a present by a noted connoisseur. Several members of the committee were invited to partake of the delicacy, and they were all agreed as to its peculiar excellence; as one of them facetiously said, it made one realize that the problem, “ Is life worth living ? ” was, after all, merely “ a question de foi(e). ” A few days later, however, what was the surprise of the giver of the feast to receive a reprimand from the committee, calling his attention to the rule which forbade members to bring food into the club !

“ Ah,” said he, “ if I had only told them I was expecting more pâtés, they would have left me alone ; mine was too small, and probably they were annoyed at not having had a second go at it.”

Though good-natured and hospitable, this lover of good living was very touchy upon certain gastronomic matters. He did not speak to a friend of his for years owing to the latter’s contention that carrots should always be put in a *navarin*—a statement which, the old gourmet declared, placed anyone making it outside the ranks of civilized man.

CHAPTER VI

ELECTIONS—COMMITTEES—REGULATIONS—RULES

THE transformation of the West End of London has entailed the destruction of numbers of the old box-like Georgian houses, and when the demand for new clubs arose, the quaint little shops in Pall Mall and St. James's Street—almost the last survival of which is Lock's hat-shop—were gradually demolished, in order to make way for huge edifices of palatial appearance. New political clubs, new professional clubs, new social clubs, sprang into existence, till what was a luxury for the few became a comparative necessity for the many.

In these days rich men often belong to a great number of clubs, and the present writer was told by a well-known cosmopolitan that his subscriptions of this kind amounted at one time to no less than £200 a year. This, however, included various racing and yachting clubs, as well as two or three on the Continent.

There are now clubs accessory to almost every kind of pursuit and sport, and the number increases every year. At the present time London alone possesses more than two hundred, whereas sixty or seventy years ago only about thirty existed. About one hundred have been founded during the

past thirty years, dividing between them no fewer than some 120,000 members. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there were probably not more than 1,200 men who belonged to clubs ; at the present day there are probably considerably more than 200,000 !

The revolution as regards clubs in London only commenced about a quarter of a century ago, and has raged with unabated energy ever since till to-day. People in every rank of life have their club, and the social distinction which was formerly attached to membership of a number of these institutions has in consequence sustained a considerable decline, even fashionable West End clubs having lost much of their old prestige.

In consequence of this there would seem to be a somewhat gloomy future in store for some of these formerly exclusive institutions, not a few of which, like old families of ancient lineage, do their best to conceal the straitened condition of their finances, generally produced by paucity of members.

Clubs into which admission could only be gained, twenty or thirty years ago, by those whose names had been on the candidates' book for nine, ten, or even twelve years, are now obliged to elect members put down only a year or two before. In some cases, indeed, it is to be feared that amalgamation with another club is the only policy which will prevent complete extinction and restore healthy vitality. In certain instances, it must be confessed, an apathetic committee, not alive to the changed and changing conditions of club-life, is responsible for the decadence of the institution over which it presides.

An absolute essential to the prosperity of a club is a good committee ; the best of all is that which consists of three elements. In the first place, it should contain two or three well-known men to act as figureheads, their names being a guarantee for the social standing of the club. In the second, one or two members ought to be thoroughly conversant with business matters, and well fitted to deal with the details of club finance. And, lastly, a certain proportion of its members ought to be men well in touch with the life of the club, and therefore thoroughly acquainted with its needs. They should have a wide knowledge of men and social matters, in order to exercise due discrimination in dealing with candidates for election ; and this is especially important in a club where the ordinary members do not take part in the ballot. In these days there are many with axes to grind, and strange things have been done in some West End clubs of late years in order to secure the election of candidates. At times, indeed, certain individuals have become noted for their lack of discretion in proposing individuals whom, for some reason or other, they desired to conciliate. As a matter of fact, the hold which the City has obtained over West End life is largely responsible for the election of many a member to clubs where, thirty or forty years ago, his admission would have been quite out of the question.

In old days everyone in the West End, more or less, knew everyone else ; for society was then a very limited circle compared with what it is to-day, when people come and go with such startling rapidity

that it grows increasingly difficult to discover who and what a candidate may be.

Considerable ingenuity has occasionally been exercised in the direction of concealing the antecedents of an undesirable but wealthy candidate.

The election of rich men to a club merely because they are rich has, on occasion, been defended by the vague plea that it is not a bad thing for a club ; as a matter of fact, it is a very bad thing indeed. Whilst a candidate of this sort is usually exceedingly anxious to be elected, it is not unusual, when his aim is achieved, for him to trouble himself no more, his desire having merely been to figure in the list of members. A man of this sort, who had taken infinite trouble to secure election to a certain club, and been successful in his efforts, had no sooner been notified of his membership than he calmly remarked : “ Ah, well, I don't suppose I shall use the place, except to wash my hands on my way to the Park !”

It is, indeed, men of moderate means rather than the very rich who use a club most, and who are therefore its principal support. Millionaires and financiers seldom spend much in their clubs, for, possessed of highly trained chefs and luxurious houses, they have naturally little temptation to spend their spare time elsewhere. The pleasures of social intercourse which can be enjoyed at the club are equally easy to obtain at home.

In old days it was exceedingly difficult for men engaged in business to obtain admission to a fashionable West End club.

The son of a famous financier was once up for

election to a fashionable club, and all his friends in the club attended to support him. In those days the ballot took place at night, and as eleven o'clock approached the club became abnormally full; indeed, members came into the drawing-room, where the election was held, who had not been seen in the club for years. It was, however, soon evident to the proposer and seconder that the crowd of members present had not come to support their candidate. Realizing the situation, they took their stand by the ballot-box, and as each of the strangers stepped up to record his vote, one said to the other: "Here comes another assassin."

At White's, blackballing was carried to such an extreme about the year 1833 that the rules had to be altered, and one blackball was no longer allowed to exclude.

At that time the system of rejection had been carried to a ludicrous pitch. "We must pill that man," a member would say; "it will do him good." "We really cannot have that fellow," said another; "I saw him wearing a black tie in the evening." Sometimes there were personal grudges or family quarrels which kept out candidates for years.

In the early part of the last century, Charles Greville and Lord George Bentinck had some difference about a turf transaction. Greville was anxious for the election of Viscount Brackley, afterwards Earl of Ellesmere; Lord George was equally determined that Viscount Brackley, as Greville's nominee, should remain outside the club. He never failed to attend the ballot and drop in his black ball.

Lord George was accustomed to take his dinner very late. He usually dined at the club at eleven o'clock, at which hour the ballots also took place. On one occasion, when Lord Brackley was up for election, Greville was delighted to find, as he thought, that Lord George was for once absent. "It's all right this time," said he, as the ballot-box was brought to him; "Bentinck's downstairs at dinner, and I shall get Brackley in at last." "Will you?" said a voice near him. He had not noticed Lord George sitting beside him on the sofa.

People who ought to know better sometimes exhibit the most lax conduct in lending their aid to the candidature of disagreeable individuals, whom for some reason or other it may suit them to please. On one occasion the members of a certain somewhat exclusive club were much disgusted at the conduct of a newly-elected member. It was eventually discovered that the objectionable individual had been proposed by a prominent political personage, whose candidate could not very well have been rejected. The matter created great irritation, and it was eventually hinted to the proposer that the new member was anything but popular.

"He's a disagreeable man, I know; but then, you see, it doesn't matter, for I so seldom use the club," was the grossly egotistical reply. No wonder the political party of which this individual is considered one of the shining lights has of late years had a hard struggle to hold its own!

One of the most original reasons for putting down a candidate was that given by a somewhat

unpopular member of a certain club. An acquaintance, looking through the candidates' book, observed that a name recently inscribed was that of an individual whom his proposer had always denounced as a regular club bore.

"Why ever did you put him down?" asked the astonished member. "I thought you particularly disliked him."

"Certainly I do," was the reply; "and as, above all things, I wish to prevent his getting in here, I thought the best way of insuring his being pilled would be to propose him myself, being well aware that anyone whom I may support will have but a very slight chance of escaping a good many black balls."

Committee-men are not infrequently placed in a very uncomfortable position when asked by friends to give their support to doubtful candidates. A man of the world, well known for his ingenuity, used to get out of the difficulty by invariably replying: "My dear fellow, you may rely on me to do the proper thing."

With the vast increase of London clubs, an altogether different state of affairs has arisen as regards the numbers of candidates waiting to come up for election, and which in the majority of instances is far less difficult than was formerly the case; few even of the old-established clubs have been able to maintain their ancient exclusiveness.

The Athenæum, Turf, and Travellers' are still, however, not at all easy about electing members. The latter, founded about 1819, in its early days attracted a good deal of notice from the fact that

a candidate for admission was required to have been 500 miles distant from London ; and a considerable sensation was once caused by the discovery that several members, who had originally entered their names, had not travelled the prescribed distance. An investigation was made, and the newspapers of the day published lists of places a visit to which was a sufficient qualification for membership of the 'Travellers'.

In former days, candidates sometimes had to wait for many years before coming up for election. Owing, however, to various causes—of which the chief was, perhaps, the great increase in the number of West End clubs—this period now rarely exceeds two, or at most three, years. The Bath Club is, I believe, an exception, because the facilities for swimming and other exercises which this institution affords to its members (drawn from both sexes) has caused a very large number of names to be inscribed upon its books. In consequence of this, a candidate must now expect a delay of several years before his name comes up for ballot.

At not a few old-established clubs a paucity of candidates has been produced by past injudicious and indiscriminating pilling. Men thinking of joining the club became aware of the fate which might befall them, and so in time the reputation of more than one club for extreme exclusiveness has led from dire necessity to the other extreme of letting in almost anyone willing to join.

Club committees occasionally contain a member who has an innate tendency to blackball everybody ; in such cases a "pill" is always found in the box,

even when the candidate is perfectly eligible. An individual of this sort was once considerably rebuffed. During an election it was found that the minimum quorum of committee-men was not present, for they were one short. To rectify matters, a notorious blackballer was hunted up at his rooms, and told that an election was in progress. He rushed back to the club, and at once voted, in most cases putting in a black ball, according to his wont; but as his was the only adverse vote, the rules having been observed, all candidates were elected. At the Athenæum as many as ninety-three black balls were once allotted to an unpopular candidate. But the greatest instance of blackballing probably ever known took place some years ago at a ladies' club, where one candidate received three more black balls than the number of members present—a case of excessive zeal indeed!

At one West End club, where the election of members was conducted in a somewhat peculiar manner, a curious incident once happened.

Here the election was by the members in general, and not by a committee, and the ballot was held in a room on the left of the entrance hall. At one time it used to be a regular custom for the friends of a candidate to hang about the door of this room canvassing in his favour, whilst, if possible, detaining anyone likely to insert a black ball, by all possible means. During a certain election, a visitor, coming to call upon a friend at his club, found himself, on passing its portals, almost forcibly hustled into this room, and eventually, thoroughly confused, made

to vote for an individual who would otherwise not have gained admission to the club.

While, as a rule, the resignation of a member or several members on account of their candidates being rejected, or for some other reason, does not affect the prosperity of a club, there have been instances of serious injury being inflicted upon a club's prestige by the defection of some very influential member. Many years ago the prosperity of White's was seriously affected by the displeasure shown by the late King at the continuance of some old-fashioned and absurd regulations as to smoking; and Boodle's, now in such a flourishing condition, was terribly damaged at one time when the late Duke of Beaufort withdrew his name. The black-balling of candidates submitted for election by prominent members occasionally leads to much acrimonious comment, and sometimes causes a number of resignations.

Election or non-election to a club depends in some cases upon many different causes, and a young man about whom nothing is known at all often stands a better chance than a distinguished individual who during his life has made enemies. Occasionally rejection is a compliment.

The resignation of members disappointed at the failure of their candidate is unreasonable, for a club is in reality a republic, where everyone is equal, and no one has any right to level a pistol at the heads of his fellow-members, or of his committee, whilst saying: "Vote for my candidate, or I will leave the club." Such an act is but a revolutionary protest against the equality of club-life. If an influential

or popular member supports some candidate, the latter has the advantage of the influence of his support, but there the preference should end. The question really is not whether a particular candidate deserves or does not deserve to be admitted, but whether the club chooses to elect him, and anything beyond this is a breach of those principles which conduce to the prosperity of clubland.

The best method of filling up vacancies in the membership of a club would really be selection rather than election, and there is no valid reason why such a method of recruiting the membership of clubs should not generally prevail. Were such a reasonable system in vogue, no one would be submitted to the barbarous mortification of being rejected. As things are now, anyone who has obtained a reputation is bound to make enemies, and the more widely he is known, the more enemies he is certain to have. Indeed, a prominent individual has often a very bad chance of being elected under the system generally observed, an absurdity emphasized by the fact that the late Mr. Gladstone was once rejected for the club at Biarritz.

Anyone whose life has been passed amidst publicity must have offended many. Some hate him merely because they happen never to have met him, and others because they have done so. Others hate him because their friends do, and others, again, disapprove of him merely on political grounds. It is, indeed, impossible to enumerate the variety of motives which cause people to hate each other with reason, and even without reason. This being so, one may well doubt the expediency of compelling

men to undergo the disgrace of being rejected for a club, according to the system which at present prevails. As matters stand now, a candidate's rejection implies that he is unfit to be a member; but in reality, in a large number of cases, it simply means that he is of sufficient importance to have attracted the ill-will, envy, or dislike of a number of people, many of whom know him only by repute.

Another desirable reform, though one which is unlikely ever to be carried out, would consist in investing committees or members with the power of ejection as well as election. There would be little hardship in a rule conferring the right of exclusion in cases of general unpopularity, and this probably would seldom have to be exercised, as the very fact of its existence would act as a check.

Within recent years a good many club committees have shown a tendency in the direction of the multiplication of rules.

The old aristocratic clubs of the past troubled themselves little with regulations and restrictions. In fact, they were excessively lenient. With the gradual incursion of the commercial class into West End life, however, a very different state of affairs has been brought about.

All over Europe, and especially in England, the *bourgeoisie* adore regulating somebody or something, and the tendency remains long after members of this class have entered what are known as fashionable circles, and managed to obtain a hold upon the committees of exclusive clubs. In such a position, not a few of them have added largely to the number

of rules, some of which in certain clubs are multiplied to the point of absolute absurdity.

Occasionally edicts of this kind possess a certain unconscious humour, as is well exemplified in a by-law, still amongst the rules of a certain club, which sets forth that "Members smoking pipes may not sit or stand in the windows."

Whether legally such an edict can be enforced would seem to be very doubtful. It is certainly within the right of a committee to prohibit pipe-smoking altogether, and such a regulation prevails in several clubs ; in many more it is an unwritten law. In rooms, however, in which pipe-smoking is allowed, it is certainly not within the powers of a committee to define exactly where members shall station themselves whilst "blowing their cloud." As a matter of fact, committee-men not infrequently fall into the error of thinking that a club committee can issue any decrees it likes. Such, however, is very far from being the case, and the reports of various lawsuits between individual members and certain committees will show that in the majority of instances the latter have not proved victorious.

If, for instance, the subscription of a club be raised, members who joined before the alteration cannot be compelled to pay more than their original subscription. The great increase in club rules and regulations has sometimes produced confusion as to what members may or may not do—a state of affairs which was non-existent when the older West End clubs were founded.

The nature of the regulations then in vogue may be realized from an inspection of a number of inter-

esting volumes, dating back to 1737, still preserved at White's, in which are inscribed the names of members of the old and new clubs, together with the few rules in force in the eighteenth century.

The books of rules issued in the middle of the last century contain very much the same provisions. The earlier books are entirely in manuscript, some of them elaborately bound; whilst those issued about 1840, though smaller, are beautifully printed, and they still retain a certain air of old-world luxury. The register of members kept by the proprietor of White's about seventy years ago much resembles one of those huge gilt-edged tomes which were in use for registering various matters connected with the Court of Versailles before the French Revolution. The calligraphy in this volume and in some of the earlier club lists is remarkable for its graceful and ornate character. Looking at them, one realizes what an exclusive coterie frequented the old clubhouse in the days when the aristocracy of England ruled supreme.

West End club committees of old days were extremely conciliatory regarding any minor breach of club law, in many cases straining a point to overlook delinquencies which were not directly injurious to the best interests of the members generally. Considerable laxity existed as to debts incurred in a club, coffee-room accounts extending into three figures being common; some of these were liquidated only at long intervals. Expelling, or even threatening to expel, a member was considered a step of extreme gravity, and one to be avoided by all possible means.

During the last twenty-five years, however, club-life, like everything else, has become "more strenuous," and anyone who habitually breaks the rules is soon made to realize that he must either alter his ways or go.

Committee-men, it should be added, whether good, bad, or indifferent, generally have a rather difficult task, for they are certain to arouse the opposition of some professional grumbler or other who is everready to blame. As a matter of fact, very often the best-meant schemes are the most unpopular, and there is a peculiar type of committee-man who often incurs the hostility of members on account of his merits. This is the individual who, possessed of an especial gift for management, takes the direction of a club into his own hands, and, becoming practically an autocrat, resents interference with his policy, which, it may be added, is not infrequently a sound one, for this type of man has generally made club management his hobby. Nevertheless, let him do as well as possible, sooner or later his rule will become unpopular, members disliking the idea of a one-man domination.

It cannot be said that the majority of house committees are in any way zealous about carrying out their functions. Where club cooking and its material are above all criticism, the credit generally lies with the efficient secretary, who in reality runs most clubs.

Some clubs have numberless sub-committees to deal with different details of management—wine committee, cigar committee, and goodness knows what else. It is, however, doubtful whether the

united efforts of all the committee-men and sub-committee-men in the world are as successful as those of one dominating individual, who knows exactly what the needs of a club really are, and gets them satisfied. On the whole, the cooking and food in West End clubs is very fair, and in many cases, if some further degree of attention were devoted to minor details, would be above criticism.

A deplorable tendency, however, is the neglect of that old-fashioned English cookery which in perfection is the delight of true gastronomists.

What is wanted in clubs is the very best material properly served and cooked. Alas ! it is to be feared that, with the exception of a very few clubs, the best of everything now goes to the palatial restaurants, who absolutely will not purchase the indifferent meat, game, and vegetables which are foisted upon more easy-going customers.

The craze for elaborate cooking in clubs would appear to have been originated by George IV when Prince Regent. During dinner one evening at Carlton House, the conversation chancing to turn upon club dinners, Sir Thomas Stepney described them as being intensely dull, owing to their eternal joints, beefsteaks, or boiled fowl with oyster sauce, followed by an apple tart. Upon this the Prince, who was much interested, sent for Watier, his own chef, and invited him then and there to take a house and organize a dinner club. Accordingly a club was started at 81 Piccadilly, by Watier ; Madison, the Prince's page, being manager ; and Labourier, one of the cooks from the royal kitchen, chef. It was soon joined by the principal dandies,

including Beau Brummell, and became the scene of much high play, chiefly at macao.

Brummell one day, when he had lost a large sum, called to the waiter: "Bring me a flat candlestick and a pistol"; upon which another member, Mr. Hythe, reputed as mad as a hatter, produced a couple of loaded pistols from his pocket, which he placed on the table, coolly saying: "Mr. Brummell, if you wish to put an end to your existence, I am extremely happy to offer you the means without troubling the waiter." During another evening's play, Raikes began to rally Jack Bouverie, brother of Lord Heytesbury, on his bad luck, and the latter took it in such bad part that he threw his play-bowl full of counters at Raikes's head. A great row ensued. Watier's closed about 1819, many of its leading members being then utterly ruined. After this the club-house was run by a set of blacklegs as a common gaming-house, which eventually was taken over by Crockford, who, in partnership with a man named Taylor, set up a very successful hazard bank.

Though Watier's had but a short existence, it lasted long enough to give men about town a taste for elaborate cooking, and no doubt contributed to send many good old English dishes out of fashion.

Owing to the large staff of servants maintained in most clubs, life is rendered very easy for the members, though a certain number are ever complaining of inattention on the part of the servants. These, as a matter of fact, are kept more or less in perpetual motion. On the whole, they are a most civil class of men, and for this reason thoroughly deserve the

Christmas subscription which serves as a sort of gigantic, but quite justifiable, tip. This is a comparatively new institution. It must be realized that club servants are not overpaid, and when upon duty their work is particularly severe. The electric bells never cease ringing until the club closes ; every member expects his wants to command immediate attention, and not a few are capricious and exacting. In some of the big clubs the total of the contributions is considerable—considerably over £500. This seems large, but, as there are over 1,000 members in several clubs, such a sum is only what might be expected.

Club servants are an especial class apart, and some waiters change constantly from club to club. This, of course, is not the case at certain of these institutions, such as the Junior Carlton, which, having a servants' pension fund, attracts the very best class. In all clubs, however, there are generally two or three old and popular servants who are looked upon as regular features of the place.

In the past, certain old retainers often became privileged characters, and presumed upon their position. A waiter named Samuel Spring, having on one occasion to write to George IV, when the latter was Prince of Wales, commenced his letter as follows : " Sam, the waiter at the Cocoa-tree, presents his compliments to the Prince of Wales," etc. His Royal Highness next day saw Sam, and, after noticing the receiving of his note and the freedom of the style, said : " Sam, this may be very well between you and me, but it will not do with the Norfolks and Arundels."

The most important servant in a club is, of course, the hall-porter. To fill this post to perfection, very exceptional qualities are required.

A hall-porter, in his capacity as a trusted and confidential club servant, is acquainted with many delicate matters, and for this reason should be a man of tact ; he must, besides, discriminate between those visitors a member may wish to see and those to whom the answer " Out of town " must be given, in tones which admit of no further inquiry. He must ever be on guard, carefully scanning every stranger who passes the club portals, and, like royalty, should possess an unerring and inexhaustible memory for faces. He must, of course, know every member by sight, and never be obliged to ask his name, even when long absence abroad may have altered his appearance, and rendered him almost unrecognizable to acquaintances of other days. A good hall-porter, in short, should know everything and everybody.

A Scotch hall-porter—Shand, of the Turf Club—was a great character in his way. Somewhat blunt and bluff by nature, he was very outspoken about anything which did not meet with his approval, and at times would hazard caustic remarks as to various phases of the club-life. Shand was possessed of considerable shrewdness and common-sense, and it was sometimes said that in certain matters his advice was better than that of any two first-class lawyers together. Shand had his likes and dislikes amongst members. This he made little attempt to conceal, his manner varying in a marked degree. He was no respecter of persons, but on

account of his shrewdness and many sterling qualities was allowed much latitude.

On one occasion a member, before leaving for the country, instructed Shand to forward a packet of photographs when it should arrive. The gentleman was away two months, but no photographs were sent to him. On his return to town he went to the Turf, where, much to his astonishment, he was handed a proof photograph which had, he found, arrived six weeks before. Shand was interrogated as to his reasons for not obeying instructions. "You said photographs," replied he. "Seeing there was only one, and knowing you were away with your wife, I was not going to be such a fool as to send it."

Many of the old school of club porters rather despised confirmed bachelors who yielded to the allurements of matrimony. "No, sir," said one of these to an inquirer, "Mr.—— don't come here now as he used; since his marriage his habits ain't reg'lar."

Club porters are very cognizant of the peculiar ways of members, and quick to notice anything out of harmony with the general tenor of club-life. The porter at a club where most of the members were so old and infirm that quantities of crutches were left in the hall was genuinely shocked to see a new member going quickly upstairs.

Failure to recognize faces—which, in justice to club porters it should be said, is in their case comparatively rare—has on occasion led to serious consequences.

The hall-porter of a certain great club, quartered upon another during the autumnal period of renova-

tion, was one day asked by a member who strode hurriedly into the club, "Are there any letters for Mr. X.?" giving a name in the club list. The porter looked hard at the gentleman, for he could not positively convince himself for the moment that he knew his face as one of the 1,500 members of the club. His gaze, however, was met unflinchingly, and the new arrival's air and appearance generally giving no cause for suspicion, the porter, having eventually concluded that this must be a member who had been out of England for some time, handed over the letters, with which the gentleman retired into the inner recesses of the club.

Half an hour or so later a jeweller arrived and asked for Mr. X., to whom he handed over a valuable piece of jewellery worth several hundreds of pounds, which, he told the hall-porter on leaving, this gentleman (as to whose social position and solvency there could be no question) had ordered two days ago by letter.

In due course Mr. X., after giving instructions that no letters were to be forwarded, departed, taking the piece of jewellery with him.

What was the hall-porter's horror the next morning to find himself confronted by another, and this time a real, Mr. X., who, on being told the story of his double, at once dashed off to Scotland Yard. The first Mr. X., it appeared, was an adroit swindler, who having by some means discovered that the real Mr. X., an exceedingly wealthy man, had ordered a jeweller to meet him at the club with a recent purchase, sent a telegram from the latter saying that the setting would not be completed till the next day,

and had then gone to the club and personated this member, who he knew only used it upon rare occasions.

Another more impudent fraud was the case of a discharged club waiter, who, disguising himself in a pair of blue spectacles, actually walked into the clubhouse from which he had been dismissed two days before, and, giving a well-known member's name, cashed a cheque. He victimized two other clubs in the same manner, and was eventually detected at a fourth.

One of the smaller West End clubs was formerly renowned for its mechanical hall-porter, an individual who had but an arm and a leg, and moved, it was said, entirely by machinery, the creaking of which, people declared, could be heard when he handed out letters.

A word here as to the porters' boxes which now exist in every club. In former days very few, if any, of these institutions contained such a convenience. The porter used to sit in a chair in the hall, with a rack containing the members' letters behind him. He played much the same part as the head-footman who opens the door at a private house. As late as the eighties of the last century there was no porter's box at White's, and the same state of affairs prevailed at Boodle's up to quite recent years. In former days, when life was more simple, there was little necessity for the complicated arrangements of bells, telephones, and speaking-tubes, which are essential to the life of a modern club. Members then did not dash in and out, and clubland was distinguished by its air of grave solemnity and calm.

CHAPTER VII

LATE SITTINGS—FINES—CARDS—CHARACTERS— SUPPER CLUBS

AMONGST the changes in club-life in London, perhaps the most striking is the almost total cessation of the late sittings in which members formerly indulged. Various causes have contributed to make people in the West End of London keep earlier hours, of which the most notable is that the number of unoccupied men, who once formed a large proportion of those living in what is called the fashionable part of the town, has shrunk to a very small number, if it has not altogether ceased to exist. In other days there were plenty of young bachelors with something under a thousand a year who spent their life in complete idleness. A club was the pivot of their existence, and here they would often sit till the small-hours of the morning.

Another cause of early hours is the great popularity of motoring and golf, the widespread indulgence in which does anything but promote a love of sitting up late.

At the time when a great number of people had nothing to do all day, not a few regarded the night as being the most amusing part of their existence, when they could forgather with choice spirits and

sit talking one against the other, as the old phrase had it, "till all was blue."

As illustrating the lateness of the hours formerly kept by members of some West End clubs, a story used to be told about a staid country member who, arriving at one of these institutions, having travelled by a night train, went up to the coffee-room and began to order breakfast, upon which he was told, by a sleepy waiter, that no suppers were served after 6 a.m.

One of the latest sitters was Theodore Hook, so renowned for spontaneous wit. He was very proud of a peculiar receipt of his own for the prevention of exposure to the evil effects of night air. "I was once very ill," said he, "and my doctor gave me particular orders not to expose myself to it; so I come up (from Fulham) every day to Crockford's, or some other place, to dinner, ever since which I have made it a rule on no account to go home again till about four or five o'clock in the morning."

Those were the days when the closing hours of a number of West End clubs were much later than is at present the case. Now there are seldom many members to be found in a club-house after one, and fines have become rare. Up to about fifteen or twenty years ago, considerable laxity prevailed as to enforcing these penalties which are exacted for sitting up after a certain hour, but the introduction of more business-like habits into West End life has put an end to such a state of affairs. Late sittings at clubs were, of course, in the vast majority of instances, connected with

card-playing; and when this pastime was more prevalent than is now the case, some confirmed lovers of whist, and later of bridge, occasionally sat very late indeed.

Whist is now practically an obsolete game, and it is curious to recall that the introduction of short whist was once considered a great innovation. "Major A.," the author of "Short Whist," a book which was famous in the middle of the last century, gives the following account of its origin: "This revolution was occasioned by a worthy Welsh Baronet preferring his lobster for supper hot. Four first-rate whist-players—consequently four great men—adjourned from the House of Commons to Brooks's, and proposed a rubber while the cook was busy. 'The lobster must be hot,' said the Baronet. 'A rubber may last an hour,' said another, 'and the lobster may be cold again or spoiled before we finish.' 'It is too long,' said a third. 'Let us cut it shorter,' said the fourth. Carried *nem. con.* Down they sat, and found it very lively to win or lose so much quicker. Besides furnishing conversation for supper, the thing was new—they were legislators, and had a fine opportunity to exercise their calling."

Another version was supplied by James Clay, who was one of the principal authorities on whist in his day. His account is as follows:

"Some eighty years back, Lord Peterborough having one night lost a large sum of money, the friends with whom he was playing proposed to make the game five points instead of ten, in order to give the loser a chance, at a quicker game, of

recovering his loss. The late Mr. Hoare of Bath, a very good whist-player, and without a superior at piquet, was one of this party, and used frequently to tell this story."

Whatever the origin of short whist may have been, the controversy between the advocates of long whist and those who supported the new game was a bitter struggle. Innovators are always hated, and have their characters blackened by those who have grown too old to care for the new, or those who are too unintelligent to do so. The clergy to a man were for long whist.

The laws of whist were first codified in England at the instance of Mr. Baldwin. The Turf Club in 1863 was called the Arlington. The matter was suggested to the committee of the Arlington, and a number of members were appointed to investigate matters and compile a code. These were: George Bentinck, M.P. for West Norfolk; John Bushe, son of the Chief Justice of "Patronage" fame; J. Clay, M.P., chairman; Charles C. Grenville; Sir Rainald Knightley, M.P.; H. B. Mayne, G. Payne, and Colonel Ripon. When completed, the code was submitted to the Portland Club, and a committee of this the chief whist club of the country considered its contents. This committee consisted of H. D. Jones, chairman, the father of the late "Cavendish," who died in 1899; Charles Adams, W. F. Baring, H. Fitzroy, Samuel Petrie, H. M. Riddell, and R. Wheble. It was on April 30, 1864, that the code was officially sanctioned—a red-letter day in the annals of whist.

The triumph of bridge over whist is a matter

of recent social history which will be dealt with later on.

The greatest breach of regulations ever committed was probably that which occurred in a well-known West End club some thirteen or fourteen years ago, when two members sat through the whole night at cards, and became so absorbed in their game that they were still sitting there at the re-opening at nine the next morning. Notwithstanding the arrival of a number of outraged members, they continued playing till one, when, having reluctantly risen from the card-table, they walked out into the sunlight, handing in their resignations as they left. As a matter of fact, the stakes played for were comparatively moderate, and the differences at the close of the séance were consequently small. Both men, it should be added, were confirmed sitters-up, and the abnormal hours kept by them on several previous occasions had called forth remonstrances from the committee. At the majority of London clubs, fines are inflicted on those sitting up after the hours of one-thirty or two, though in some cases they begin earlier or later. In such club-houses as are not definitely closed at two-thirty or three, the fines gradually rise till the hour of five or six o'clock is reached, when any further sojourn in the club-house is punished by expulsion.

The amount to be paid for remaining in certain clubs till the actual time of closing is considerable; nevertheless there have been instances of members remaining to the very last minute who were not card-players, and merely sat up through indifference or thoughtlessness.

The present writer remembers one member who actually had to pay a fine of £17 for sitting all alone in a club till the doors were closed. This gentleman had a perfect mania for not going to bed, and his habit of keeping the whole club-house going, long after the other members were in bed, eventually caused a complete readjustment of the scale of fines and the adoption of an earlier hour for closing. As a matter of fact, though he paid the heavy fines with perfect complacency, the sums received were not sufficient to cover the expenses of lighting, servants, and the like, for the whole establishment, of course, had to be kept going till it was his pleasure to depart.

In old days, quite a number of club-men would habitually turn night into day ; but this is no longer the case, and the few members who still adhere to the habits of another age are generally regarded with little favour by committees. Several clubs, as a matter of fact, have altered their hours entirely to prevent the club-house from being kept open solely for the benefit of one or two members.

Another complaint against late sitters is that the club servants, in consequence of being obliged to keep later hours, are unfitted for their work ; but there is really no particular reason why this should be the case, as a different staff comes on duty towards the evening, the members of which, at several clubs, are allotted a certain proportion of any fines.

The latest club of all used formerly to be the Garrick, where, in the days when the late Sir Henry Irving, Mr. Toole, and others, came to supper in

the small dining-room, very late or rather very early hours indeed were kept. Within the last few years, late sittings have ceased to be the order of the day except on certain occasions, and new rules have been made, the general tendency of which is to encourage a comparatively early retirement to bed. An exception, however, is made in favour of Saturday night, the traditional evening for suppers at the Garrick.

One of the latest clubs in London used to be the St. James', founded more than forty years ago by the late Marquis d'Azeglio and others. One of the objects for which this club was formed was to provide a meeting-place for secretaries and attachés after balls and parties, and for this reason no fine at all was inflicted before 4 p.m. It may also be added that in former years such fines as did exist were not very rigorously enforced. Quite a different state of affairs, however, now prevails, the whole scale of fines having been readjusted some years ago, owing to which—and other causes—late sittings are now things of the past.

The Beefsteak Club, like the Garrick, once contained quite a number of members who had a great disinclination to go to bed, and who lingered late over the pleasant talk of the supper-table. Here also the spirit of the age has effected a change, for practically all the old school of Beefsteakers, of which that most delightful of men, the late Joseph Knight, was such a brilliant example, are gone, and the hours kept are now very reasonable.

The Turf Club, which used formerly to be full of people after the theatres were closed, is now

somewhat deserted at night, and the same state of affairs prevails at practically all the West End clubs.

The late hours once kept by many club-men were in a great measure the cause of the dislike with which a number of old-fashioned, strait-laced people used to regard London clubs, which, as has already been said, were denounced as pernicious resorts where drinking and gaming were by no means unknown. To-day such accusations can no longer with any justice be sustained.

In France, however, the state of affairs as regards gaming, at least, is very different, for, owing to the heavy tax levied by Government upon club funds, no institution of the nature of a club can be prosperously conducted without some amount of gambling. Indeed, most French clubs of any social standing derive a considerable portion of their income from card-money, and not a few permit baccarat, the profits of which, drawn from the Cagnotte, bring in a large sum of money to the club funds. In England, however, except in a few exceptional cases—Crockford's, for instance—no club has ever existed for the avowed purpose of play. To begin with, public opinion has always viewed this pastime (which so often degenerates into a vice) with extremely unfavourable eyes, and no one of any position has cared to be seen openly risking large sums of money upon the turn of a card. In addition to this, any protracted continuance of high play in a club has always been reprobated by a large majority of members as being likely to produce a scandal—and, as a matter of fact,

a scandal has almost invariably followed in the wake of high play.

The French, many of whom set aside a certain amount of money to be used for play—a *bourse du jeu*, as it is called—are well aware of the danger of losing their heads at cards ; but the vast majority of Englishmen are soon made nervous and excited when once they have been caught by the fascination of play. For this reason—or some other—a high game never goes on very long without the occurrence of a catastrophe, for sooner or later someone will lose a far larger sum of money than he can either afford or pay. The generality of club members limit their gambling to a mild game of bridge, and there is very little play at anything else now. Some twenty years ago, however, there was a slight epidemic of the gaming fever in the West End of London, and quite a number of so-called “clubs,” the only object of which was high play, were started, mostly by shrewd veterans of the sporting world, some of whom remembered the days when hazard had extracted such vast sums from the pockets of careless Corinthians, and when wily Crockford conducted his great Temple of Chance in St. James’s Street. Such clubs were, of course, furnished with a committee and an elaborate set of rules, the most respected of which were those relating to the fines. These, after a certain hour, brought much grist to the proprietors’ mills. Such clubs were in reality little but miniature casinos, and the main, if not the sole, qualification for membership lay in being possessed of ample funds and a tendency to part with them easily. The chief of these institutions

were situated off Piccadilly and St. James's Street, about which the spirit of that reckless speculation which raged in this neighbourhood so fiercely in the eighteenth century has always had a tendency to linger.

Baccarat was the game played at these haunts, and, though everything was quite fairly conducted, the loss of large sums by well-known young men about town eventually attracted considerable comment, and before very long the Park Club was raided by the police, upon which occasion a high legal luminary, it is said, was with the greatest difficulty smuggled out of the place. A celebrated trial, at the end of which baccarat was finally ruled to be an illegal game, resulted in the closing of this club. A somewhat similar institution, the Field Club, rose on its ashes, but this also was eventually raided and put an end to. Since that time one or two small clubs have been formed by a certain number of people desirous of playing bridge or poker for high stakes, but all of them have had a brief existence. The clubs just mentioned, it should be added, were quite different from the gaming clubs of the past, the members being rich men well able to take care of themselves, and the only reason for their cessation was that, as the membership was in every case very limited, they got tired of playing at the game of dog eat dog.

Sixty years ago, and later, there was a good deal of high play in London clubs. During the action for libel brought by Lord de Ros, when he had been accused of cheating at Graham's, one witness admitted that in the course of fifteen years he had

won £35,000, chiefly at whist ; another said that his winnings averaged £1,600 a year. He generally played from three to five hours daily before dinner, and did not deny often having played all night.

Graham's, 87 St. James's Street, was at that time the headquarters of whist, and here it was said Lord Henry Bentinck invented the "Blue Peter," or call for trumps.

Here Lieutenant-Colonel Aubrey, who declared that, next to winning, losing was the greatest pleasure in the world, is supposed once to have lost £35,000.

Bridge is said to have been first played in London at the Portland in the autumn of 1894, when it was introduced by Lord Brougham.

He was, it is said, playing whist, and, as he dealt the last card, neglected to turn it face upwards. By way of apology he then said : " I'm sorry, but I thought I was playing bridge ;" and by way of explanation he gave a brief description of the new game, which so attracted his fellow-members that it soon took the place of whist.

Bridge, however, had been played long before this in Eastern Europe, and even in Persia, where the present writer perfectly remembers it as a popular game as far back as 1888.

The members of a colony of Greeks, indeed, are said to have played a sort of bridge in Manchester eighteen years before this, though the value of no trumps and of four aces was rather less than is now the case.

The headquarters of bridge is the Portland Club, now located at the corner of St. James's Square. It moved here from Stratford Place, its old original

home having been in Bloomsbury Square. For everything connected with bridge, as it was formerly for whist, the Portland is the acknowledged authority as the arbiter of disputes and for the promulgation of rules. There are about three hundred members of this club, which admits guests to dine, after which they may play in a small card-room specially reserved for their use.

Another card-playing club, which, however, admits no strangers, is the Baldwin, in Pall Mall East, which opens at two o'clock in the afternoon. The stakes here are very small.

Besides these admirably-conducted institutions, as Theodore Hook wrote, there are several

“Clubs for men upon the turf (I wonder they aren't under it);

Clubs where the winning ways of sharper folks pervert the use of clubs,

Where *knaves* will make subscribers cry,

‘Egad! this is the *deuce* of clubs.’”

The latter term certainly applied to Crockford's, which was flourishing when the lines in question were written. Here the wily proprietor neglected nothing to attract men of fashion of that day, most of whose money eventually drifted into his pockets.

Well knowing the value of a first-class cuisine, he provided every sort of culinary luxury, and took care that the suppers should be so excellent as to make his club the resort of all sorts of men about town, who flocked in about midnight from White's, Brooks's, and the Opera, to titillate their palates and try their luck at the hazard-table afterwards. Many who began cautiously, and risked but little,

by degrees acquired a taste for the excitement of play, and ended by staking large sums, which they generally lost. Some few only were lucky ; a certain young blood, for instance, who one night won the price of his "troop" in the Life Guards, purchased it, and never touched a dice-box again.

If, however, people were more or less sure to lose their money at Crockford's, they were equally certain of getting admirable food at a quite nominal price, and for this reason many men of small means had little reason to complain of the great gambling institution in St. James's Street.

As was once wittily said, a certain text of Scripture exactly applied to the proprietor. This was : "He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away."

Benjamin Crockford had begun life as a fish-monger near Temple Bar, but, being of a sporting character, was accustomed to stake a few shillings nightly at a low gaming-house kept by George Smith in King's Place ; later, he was lucky in a turf transaction. His first venture as a gaming-house proprietor was the purchase, for £100, of a fourth share in a hell at No. 5, King Street. His partners here were men named Abbott, Austin, and Holdsworth, and their operations were not above suspicion. Afterwards Crockford, in partnership with two others, opened a French hazard bank at 81 Piccadilly, and here again there was foul-play. The bank cleared £200,000 in a very short time ; false dice were found on the premises and exhibited in a shop window in Bond Street for some days, and Crockford was sued by

numbers of his victims, but took care to compromise every action before it had entered upon such an acute stage as to entail publicity.

Crockford's patrons were all men of rank and breeding, the utmost decorum was observed, and society at the club was of the most pleasant and fashionable character. There was no smoking-room, and in the summer evenings the habitués of Crockford's used to stand outside in the porch, with their cigars, drinking champagne and seltzer, and looking at the people going home from parties or the Opera. White's, except in the afternoons, was deserted, members naturally going across the way, where there was a first-rate supper with wine of unexceptionable quality provided free of cost.

Crockford was well repaid for his liberality in these matters. By the profits of the hazard-table he realized in the course of a few years the enormous sum of £1,200,000.

Though the days when a certain number of London clubs were merely gaming-houses in disguise have long gone, there still exist club-men whose principal interest is the turf, and these not infrequently are much interested in the tape, around which they congregate when any important race is being run, the while mysterious murmurings and vague vaticinations prevail. Such members are generally young; with the increase of years they become, for the most part, profoundly indifferent to the expensive question of first, second, or third. A few ardent enthusiasts, however, retain their taste for this form of speculation, in spite of the long and inevitable series of disappointments which are the

lot of the vast majority of starting-price backers. Rushing wildly into the club, they fly at once to the tape, generally dashing off to the telephone to put more money into some bookmaker's pocket.

The cricket enthusiast is another great patron of the tape, by which he is either thoroughly depressed or rendered radiant, according to the comparative failure or success of his favourite county. He is generally a very kindly man, of innocent tastes and habits, which speaks well for the humanizing influence of Lord's and the Oval.

Two clubs which are much frequented by the best class of sporting men are the comparatively old-established Raleigh (founded in 1858), in Regent Street, and the newer Badminton (founded in 1876), in Piccadilly, both of them well-managed institutions.

The Raleigh, which has always enjoyed a reputation for its cooking, in its earlier days was the scene of many an amusing prank played by younger members. All this, however, has long been a thing of the past.

A striking change in club-life is the vastly decreased consumption of alcohol. In former days, quite a number of members used every day to imbibe a considerable quantity of pernicious brandy and soda, the excess of which, without doubt, sent so many of the last generation to a premature grave. I do not by any means wish to imply that such men became intoxicated. Thirty or forty years ago, the drinking habits, so prevalent at the beginning of the last century, had already fallen into great disrepute, but brandy and soda was, for some unknown reason,

considered a fairly harmless drink, and many clubmen imbibed small quantities of it all the day through without in any way showing the slightest effect. Nevertheless, the continuous stream of alcohol insidiously ruined many a fine constitution. Sensible men of the present age study their health far more carefully, and the amount of what are known as "drinks" served daily in the best West End clubs is now very small indeed. On the other hand, "teas," which forty years ago were little indulged in, are taken by almost everyone.

As late as the early seventies of the past century most clubs contained a few members of decidedly bibulous habits. These were often by courtesy known as the "Captain" or "Major," military titles for which a short term of service in the auxiliary forces had scarcely qualified them. They were, however, often original characters, whose occasional eccentricities deserved the good-humoured toleration with which they were viewed.

To-day, however, a very different state of affairs prevails, and even the slightest tendency to habitual excess is seriously resented; a decided stigma, indeed, attaches to anyone even suspected of intemperance, whilst any open demonstration of inebriety would certainly call forth demands for drastic measures being applied to the member indulging in such a breach of unwritten club law.

The great diminution of drinking amongst the more prosperous classes is nowhere more strikingly shown than by the great decrease of club receipts derived from the sale of wine and spirits. On the other hand, the consumption of mineral

waters and other non-alcoholic beverages has largely increased.

Within the last two decades there has been a marked tendency in West End clubland to relax the somewhat harsh restrictions formerly in force on Sunday, which in England is so often a day of dulness and gloom, causing one to wonder how Longfellow could ever have described it as "the golden clasp which binds together the volume of the week." At some clubs it is still a very quiet day, no billiards or cards being played by members; but in others "sabbatarian strictness" has been relaxed. In one or two clubs a sort of compromise exists, and members are permitted to play billiards without the services of a marker.

Club customs have, on the whole, changed but little. Curiously enough, in spite of the increase of democratic ways in most West End clubs, the custom of sitting down to dinner in evening dress has tended to increase rather than to diminish. At the same time it must be acknowledged that the greatest freedom is permitted in matters of costume, whilst the smart frock-coat, once so conspicuous in clubland, has practically disappeared. Straw hats and deerstalkers abound on club hat-pegs, and lounge suits are worn throughout the day till dinner; top-hats and black coats have decreased in number.

Almost unlimited freedom now prevails as to choice of dress, and sometimes, perhaps, this licence is carried too far.

In the autumn most members of London clubs become wanderers, their houses being given over to painters and decorators, whilst they receive the

hospitality of other clubs. A few, amongst which are the National Liberal and the Garrick, never close ; and, indeed, the membership of the former is too large for this club to be received by any other. The painting and decorating in clubs which never leave their habitations is done by easy stages, one or two rooms at a time being given over to the workmen engaged upon the renovating process which London smoke renders so necessary.

Whilst club-life, on the whole, has become less formal and ceremonious, a certain number of old-established clubs still maintain a grave solemnity of tone, and such institutions generally contain a considerable number of "permanent officials"—the class which, whatever party may nominally be in control, really runs the country.

These men, whose lives are passed at various Government Offices, in course of time acquire a peculiar look and manner, so entirely different from that of ordinary humanity that the careful observer and student of the "permanent official" is irresistibly prompted to inquire whether he can ever have been young? The cut of his clothes, his walk, his mannerisms, and the stately slowness of his movements, all betoken a life passed amidst Government forms, schedules, and official papers. Everything he does is prompted by routine, even to the ordering of a generally well-chosen and moderate dinner.

As he is perfectly aware of the fact that he belongs to the real ruling caste of the land, the permanent official not unnaturally exudes the dignity which he feels is necessary to his high posi-

tion. One pictures him in a tornado or an earthquake still speaking in the same measured tones, and briefly asking (for he is generally a man of few words) who is responsible?

The permanent official, when married, generally has a very presentable wife, chosen no doubt, like his dinner, with a view to not upsetting the even tenor of his daily round. It is, however, almost impossible to believe that he has ever been in love. If he has, any amorous communications penned by him must, one is sure, have been carefully copied and docketed for future reference.

Many permanent officials—but not those of the Foreign Office, who are generally agreeable men of the world—develop into mere automata, radiating a sort of orderly gloom.

The majority live to a good age, in latter years evolving into an even less vivacious type—the “retired permanent official”—very solemn and silent, not infrequently pompous, speaking scarcely at all.

A foreigner of distinction, owing to his official position, had been made an honorary member of a well-known London club. The number of permanent officials included in its membership was such that the club was a veritable Palace of Silence, and the foreigner, becoming depressed by the pervading atmosphere of gloom, one day ventured to remark to an acquaintance, a retired official of high rank: “You seem to have little conversation here.” “Meet me to-morrow afternoon at three o’clock in the smoking-room, and we will have a talk,” was the solemn reply. On the morrow the

foreigner duly repaired to the appointed place and met his friend, who, settling himself upon a comfortable sofa, took out his watch, looked at it, and said: "I am sorry I can only give you twenty-five minutes." For this space of time they talked, or rather the foreigner did, for the other uttered little but an occasional word. Precisely as the clock marked the appointed hour the latter rose, and, somewhat wearily saying good-bye, walked out of the building. Judge of the foreigner's horror the next morning when, on opening his paper, he read that Sir ——, his friend of the day before, had fallen down dead in Pall Mall, stricken by cerebral collapse! The unwonted effort of the previous day's conversation had been too much for the poor man. For years past he had been used to the almost unbroken silence of the club, which with undeviating regularity he was wont to frequent. The foreigner, who felt that he was practically guilty of homicide, declared he would speak no more in English clubs, and would take good care to warn his foreign friends against any similar murderous tactics should they come to England.

In many clubs there is a mysterious member or two, about whom nothing seems to be known. No one can say who he is, what locality gave him birth, or what his available means of subsistence may be. He is the child of mystery, nor does he ever attempt to raise the veil, except when he vaguely alludes to "his people in the North"; but whether he means the North of England or the North of London no one whom he honours with his acquaintance is ever able to discover. Everything about such a man is

a mystery, including the circumstances which led to his election.

Whilst eccentricity, for the most part, takes the innocuous form of avoidance of society, there have been people who have suffered from a disquieting love of sociability. Such a one used to make a practice of speaking to all his fellow-members, whether he knew them or not. One day, however, finding himself seated opposite an old gentleman who was reading a newspaper, this individual entirely failed to obtain any answer at all to an incessant flow of talk, so, becoming angry, he at last kicked up his foot and sent the paper flying into its astonished reader's face, the result being that the aggressor very shortly afterwards retired from the club.

It is said that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, and it is surprising how disagreeable one cantankerous man who uses his club can make it to those around him. He is always coming upon the scene when not wanted. If you go up to the library, you find him snoring on the sofa, with the very book you have come in search of in his useless grasp. If you dine accidentally at the club, your table is sure to be placed next to his. Are you having a quiet chat with a friend, most assuredly will this wretched being drop in and spoil the conversation. He is always quarrelling with people, and asking you to support his complaints. Such a man has no friends, and the list of his acquaintances is limited.

In past days old members were sometimes very severe in their comments upon newly-elected young

men of whose ways they did not approve. One of the latter, just elected to a club, having somehow incurred the wrath of a certain irascible character, to his amazement heard him saying: "What an insupportable cub that fellow is! What on earth were the committee doing to elect him! Why, I'd give him a pony not to belong now." This perturbed the new member, who left the club-house thinking what course he ought to take, and, as luck would have it, met on the staircase a member who bore the well-deserved reputation of being a thorough man of the world. Stopping the latter, he told him of the insulting remark, and inquired what he ought to do. "Do?" was the reply; "why, nothing at present. After you've used the club for another month, you'll probably be offered a hundred!"

In more or less every club there are one or two solemn-looking members, who are seldom known to speak to anyone, but spend their time in what is, or looks like, deep study. Votaries of almost perpetual silence, they are easily made to frown at the sound of conversation. The favourite haunt of such as these is generally the library, which they regard as their own domain, and where on no account must they be disturbed.

One of this class, who in the more expansive days of his youth, twenty years before, had had a great friend who, after leaving the University, went out to live in the East, was one day, according to his usual wont, reading in the library of his club, when, to his horror, he heard the door briskly open. A robust figure, whose countenance seemed not

entirely unfamiliar, strode up to him, and, seizing his hand heartily, shook it. "Well, old fellow," said the intruder, "it's many a long day since we met. Now let's hear what you have been doing all these years." Without saying a word, the ruffled student raised a warning finger, and pointed at the placard of "Silence" on the mantelpiece.

"I was glad to see the man again," said he afterwards; "but he had no business to break one of our rules."

Another kind of club-man is the irascible pedant, whose idiosyncrasies make conversation almost impossible. He will address you; he will lecture; he will instruct you; but he will not chat with you—conversation with him is a monologue. He is to preach, you are to listen. If you interrupt him, he will look at you as if sincerely pained by your audacity; if you advance an opinion, he will promptly contradict it; and even if you ask him a question upon a subject of which he knows nothing, he will reply at enormous length.

It was a man of this kind who once described Niagara as a horrid place where you couldn't hear the sound of your own voice.

In former days many clubs included amongst their members a privileged joker or two, to whom very great tolerance was extended. This type of individual used to be particularly fond of exercising his propensities at the expense of the most solemn and pompous of his fellow-members, on whom he would play all sorts of childish tricks.

On one occasion, for instance, having got possession of an old gentleman's spectacles, a joker of this

kind took out the glasses. When the old man found them again, he was much concerned at not being able to see, and exclaimed: "Why, I've lost my sight!" Thinking, however, that the impediment to vision might be caused by the dirtiness of the glasses, he then took them off to wipe them, but, not feeling anything, became still more frightened, and cried out: "Why, what's happened now? I've lost my feeling, too!"

Some irrepressible jokers have paid for their love of fun by having to resign their membership. One of them, whose escapades were notorious in London twenty years ago, sitting half asleep in a certain Bohemian club, became very much annoyed at a very red-headed waiter who kept buzzing about his chair. The sight of the fiery locks was eventually too much for this wild spirit, and, darting up and seizing the man, he emptied an inkstand over his head before he could escape.

The result, of course, was expulsion from the club, besides which very substantial compensation was rightly paid to the poor waiter, who complained that he could not go about his work in a parti-coloured condition, and it would take some time before the effects of the ink disappeared.

Members who have developed undue eccentricity occasionally cause uneasiness to their fellow-clubmen, for it is sometimes difficult exactly to define the point where personal idiosyncrasies become disquieting to others.

One individual, whom the writer recollects, used to enter a certain club and call for all the back numbers which could be obtained of some weekly

paper, and then sit solemnly writing at a table surrounded by pile upon pile of the periodical in question. After about an hour of this, he would gather his papers together, and, striding up to the porter's box, would say: "Please inform the Prime Minister that, after due consideration, I have decided that the Cabinet must resign. I will call next Monday and leave word as to the composition of the new one."

A very eccentric member of one club had a disquieting craze which caused him to walk perpetually up and down stairs. The moment he came in of a morning he started for the top floor, going upstairs with a preoccupied air, as though he had serious business on hand. Arrived at the topmost landing, he would strike his forehead with the absent-minded despair of a short memory, then turn on his heel and run down again. This operation he would repeat many times a day. The installation of a lift was said to have been a sad blow to him; at first he regarded it with profound distrust, until, with increasing years, he discovered its value, when he became very objectionable to his fellow-members by his excessive use of it.

Another original character who belonged to a well-known club used to spend a considerable time every day contemplating himself in a huge mirror, and bursting into explosive fits of laughter. During the whole of this man's membership he was supposed only to have once spoken to a fellow-member, who, it should be added, was also rather eccentric.

A less misanthropic though highly unconven-

tional club-man used to remain in bed all day, getting up only about seven, when he would go to his club to have dinner, which was really a breakfast. This habit, it was said, had been considerably strengthened by reason of the fact that, having once broken through it, and got up early in order to witness some sporting event, he had on his return found himself minus his watch—a loss which more than ever convinced him of the dangers of early rising.

Eccentric behaviour in a club once led to an amusing election incident.

A well-known character, who had sat for a certain borough for years, got into considerable trouble at his club—a very exclusive one—owing to having one wet day taken off his boots in the smoking-room, and sat warming his stockinged feet before the fire. Complaints were made to the committee, the members of which, highly indignant, at first proposed to turn the offender out. Eventually he escaped that extreme indignity, though he was severely reprimanded.

Shortly after this the culprit, owing to a General Election, found himself obliged to defend his seat against an exceedingly active Radical opponent possessed of much caustic wit.

At this time hustings still existed, and candidates exchanged raillery, amounting occasionally to abuse.

Both candidates happened to have foreign names, and both entreated the electors to give their votes only to a true-born Englishman.

The sitting member was especially bitter, and in-

dulged in uncompromising abuse of his opponent—an alien against whose exotic ways he cautioned the electors.

“Alien indeed!” retorted the other. “Anyhow, I have never been nearly turned out of a club for indecent exposure, like my traducer!”

“Only my boots!” roared out his opponent.

But all was in vain, and the electors, fully convinced that their old member had appeared naked in his club, declined to re-elect him.

About two years ago West End clubs were, it is said, at their worst as regards membership; but since then the tide seems to have turned, and a few then in a parlous state have once more found the path of prosperity.

As a matter of fact, the competition of restaurants has improved the cooking in clubs, and many committees have sensibly come to recognize that an attitude of indifference to modern improvements and the changed needs of members does not conduce to the well-being of the institutions over which they preside.

Then, too, a number of clubs which had been tottering for years have disappeared, with the result that a number of others have gained members. Of late years also, the craze for founding new clubs seems rather to have died away, whilst the fashionable “restaurant clubs,” which for a short time seemed likely to become popular features of West End life, have entirely ceased to exist.

The chief of these was the *Amphitryon*, established some twenty years ago at 41 Albemarle Street, Piccadilly, and presided over by M. Émile

Aoust, once maître d'hôtel at Bignon's in Paris. The object of the club was to provide the attractions of a first-rate French restaurant, which at the same time should be absolutely exclusive. The subscription was three guineas, and no entrance fee was paid by the first 200 members who joined the club, amongst whom were the then Prince of Wales and the Duke of Connaught.

The small club-house was comfortable enough, and the cuisine left little to grumble at. About 700 members were enrolled, and candidates kept flocking in. Members were only allowed to introduce three guests at a time, for the accommodation in the dining-room was very limited.

An inaugural dinner was given to the Prince of Wales, and a highly successful evening was enjoyed by fourteen selected guests at the cost of £120. "Kirsch glacé," one of the *plats* which figured in the menu, is said to have caused some amusement, the *k* being called a misprint for *h*, the first letter of the name of a prominent foreign financier then in great favour with smart society.

The chief faults of this club were its expense and its limited accommodation. A first-class dinner was absurdly expensive, costing close upon £10 a head. In addition to this, the little tables were, on account of the smallness of the premises, so closely packed that intimate conversation was next to impossible. It must be observed, however, that there were private rooms upstairs which could be reserved for dinner-parties, and many were given.

After a short time the Amphitryon closed its doors, and left behind it nothing but the memory

of some excellent dinners and a certain number of heavy unpaid bills.

A somewhat similar institution was the *Maison Dorée* Club, at No. 38 Dover Street. The committee was an influential one, numbering amongst its members the Dukes of St. Albans and Wellington, Lord Breadalbane, Lord Dungarvan, Lord Castletown, Lord Camoys, Lord Lurgan, Prince Henry of Pless, and Lord Suffield. The entrance fee was two guineas, and the annual subscription the same sum. The cuisine was under the management of the *Maison Dorée*, which was then in the last days of its existence in Paris.

The club-house was almost too elaborately decorated. Gold, indeed, had spread even to the area railings, and the lock of the area door itself was adorned with heavy dull gold! The pantry-maid, it was said, had a solid gold key to open and shut the latter for the convenience of any favoured policeman! On the whole, the building presented a most imposing, if rather gaudy, appearance. The decorations of the dining-room consisted principally of pastoral scenes painted on tapestry panels in the French style, whilst a large glass tea-house overhung the garden, and was supposed to form a highly attractive feature.

The club, however, met with the same fate as the *Amphitryon*; indeed, it fared a great deal worse, the latter for a time, at least, having been a success, which the *Maison Dorée* never was. Lingered on in a moribund state, it soon flickered out, its disappearance being followed some time later by that of the parent restaurant in Paris, which, owing to

lack of support, ended its career, to the regret of all lovers of high-class gastronomy.

Later on, one or two other restaurants made an attempt to introduce "supper clubs," where members might remain after 12.30, the closing hour which a ridiculous Act of Parliament fixes for all licensed premises. None of these supper clubs, however, proved successful. Quite naturally, people soon became tired of seeing the same faces ; besides, there is nothing that amuses ladies so much as scanning and criticizing the heterogeneous crowds which nightly flock to restaurants after the theatre. Willis's—for a time much frequented by the smart world—was remodelled and spoilt in order to make room for a club of this sort, with the result that an excellent restaurant lost its popularity, and finally disappeared altogether.

Not very many years ago, before the registration of clubs was made compulsory by law, there were many so-called "clubs" in London which were little but revivals of the old night-houses and gaming-hells, though the latter were always subject to occasional raids. Whether the suppression of markedly Bohemian clubs generally was an entirely wise measure seems somewhat doubtful ; the mere hounding of dissipation from one haunt to another effects no good, and in all probability the best plan would have been to tolerate a certain number of such resorts, provided they were orderly and did not constitute a nuisance to the neighbourhood.

The gambling clubs, often run by very shady characters, undoubtedly did considerable harm to numbers of pigeons, who, however, would in most

instances have lost their money even had such resorts not existed. The best known of these so-called "clubs," however, were started solely to pillage some rich young dupes who formed the support of such places and their crowd of most dubious members. Clubs of this kind often provided a very luxurious supper free, it being well worth the while of the proprietor to attract anyone likely to keep the place going. As a rule, the individual in question also laid the odds during the afternoon, and some colossal pieces of roguery were not infrequently perpetrated in connection with turf speculation. As late as the early eighties of the last century, young men about town were exposed to every kind of insidious robbery. The more blatant forms of West End brigandage seem now to have abated ; but human nature does not change, and very likely they have merely altered in form.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TRAVELLERS'—ORIENTAL—ST. JAMES'—TURF
—MARLBOROUGH—ISTHMIAN—WINDHAM—
BACHELORS'—UNION—CARLTON—JUNIOR CARL-
TON—CONSERVATIVE—DEVONSHIRE—REFORM

THOUGH, as has before been said, the majority of West End clubs have been obliged by force of circumstances to relax the exclusiveness which was formerly one of their most salient features, a few still manage to retain that social prestige which was the pride of quite a number in the past.

A conspicuous instance is the 'Travellers', a club which from the days of its foundation has always been somewhat capricious in electing members. The list of public men who have been blackballed here is considerable. The late Mr. Cecil Rhodes was rejected in 1895, and at different times the late Lord Sherbrooke, the late Lord Lytton, Lord Randolph Churchill, and other public men have met with the same ill fate.

The 'Travellers' Club was founded in the second decade of the nineteenth century by Lord Castle-reagh, the present club-house being built by Barry in 1832. Considerable amusement was aroused by the qualification for membership (which still exists). This laid down that candidates must have travelled

out of the British Isles to a distance of at least 500 miles from London in a straight line.

The supposed partiality of members for exploration was amusingly set forth by Theodore Hook in the following lines :

“ The travellers are in Pall Mall, and smoke cigars so cosily,
And dream they climb the highest Alps, or rove the plains
of Moselai.

The world for them has nothing new, they have explored
all parts of it ;

And now they are club-footed ! and they sit and look at
charts of it.”

The club-house would appear to have been little altered since its erection, with the exception that a recess for smokers has been contrived in the entrance hall. The building, it should be added, narrowly escaped destruction on October 24, 1850, when a fire did great damage to the billiard-rooms. These were, by the way, an afterthought, and an addition to the original building ; but they were by no means an improvement upon the first design, for they greatly impaired the beauty of the garden front.

The library at the Travellers' is a delightful room, most admirably designed, with a fine classical frieze. A relic preserved here is Thackeray's chair ; but as the only connection of the great novelist with this club appears to have been a blackballing, the presence of such a memento seems rather strange.

Except the dining-room and the library, the interior of the Travellers' Club is somewhat cold and bare. No pictures decorate its walls, and the general appearance of the place, whilst highly decorous, is hardly calculated to delight the eye.

The Travellers' still clings to certain rules framed

in a more formal age, and smoking is prohibited except in certain rooms. It is rather curious that, in days when ladies tolerate cigarettes in their very boudoirs, not a few clubs should still treat smokers in the same way as prevailed in the days when tobacco was only tolerated in one or two uncomfortable apartments.

Several distinguished men have belonged to this club, the membership of which includes many high Government officials—heads of Departments, Ambassadors, and *Chargés d’Affaires*. The general tone here is one of solemn tranquillity ; and though in former days there was a regular muster of whist-players, which included Talleyrand, no game of cards seems now to be played.

During the season of autumnal renovation the ‘Travellers’ extends its hospitality to one or two other clubs. A dashing young soldier, becoming in this way a visitor, and being desirous of playing bridge, called for a couple of packs of cards and a well-known racing paper. To his intense disgust the astounded waiter who took the order, after making inquiry, reported that the cards would have to be obtained from outside, and the ‘Travellers’ did not take in the paper asked for.

Though in a certain way a sociable club—for a large proportion of the members are acquainted with one another—the ‘Travellers’ is principally given up to reading, dozing, and meditation. Of conversation there is but little.

Another club which was founded during the same epoch as the ‘Travellers’ was the Oriental.

A hundred years ago there were several institu-

tions connected with the East in the West End. Such were the Calcutta Club, the Madras Club, the Bombay Club, and the China Club, frequented chiefly by merchants and bankers. These, however, were in reality associations rather than clubs.

The Bombay Club was located at 13 Albemarle Street, and consisted of one large news-room and an anteroom. It opened at ten in the morning and closed at midnight, light refreshments being obtainable of the porter, whilst smoking was strictly prohibited.

The need for a regular club-house where Anglo-Indians and others might meet in comfort gradually came to be felt, and in July 1824 the Oriental Club was started at 16 Lower Grosvenor Street. The original club-house, it may be added, has now become business premises, being occupied by Messrs. Collard and Collard. It is said that when the owner of this house gave it up to the club he sold some of its furniture and effects to a certain Mr. Joseph Sedley, afterwards immortalized by Thackeray as the pseudo-collector of Boggley Wallah.

The first steward of the Oriental was a Mr. Pottanco, who had long been employed by Sir John Malcolm, probably in the East. Members presented books and pictures, and one, Sir Charles Forbes, cheered the hearts of the Anglo-Indians by sometimes sending a fine turtle to be converted into soup.

The first chairman of the Oriental Club was Sir John Malcolm, a very popular figure in society. Sir John was a great talker, on account of which

he had been nicknamed "Bahawder Jaw," it was said, by Canning. There were ten Malcolm brothers, two of them Admirals. All ten seem to have possessed the same characteristic, for when Lord Wellesley was assured by Sir John that he and three brothers had once met together in India, the Governor-General declared it to be "impossible—quite impossible!" Malcolm reiterated his statement. "I repeat it is impossible; if four Malcolms had come together, we should have heard the noise all over India."

Some of the members of the Oriental Club in old days, no doubt owing to having resided for prolonged periods in the East, had eccentric ways. One member was dissatisfied with the Gruyère cheese, calling it French, not Swiss, and insisted that the waiter who brought it to him should taste it. The waiter demurred, upon which the member complained of his misconduct to the committee. The latter, however, took the waiter's part, rightly conceiving that it was no part of the waiter's duty to act as cheese-taster. In another case, a member removed his boots before the library fire, and presently walked off in his stockinged feet into another room. The library waiter, finding the ownerless boots, took them away, and the member on his return was so greatly annoyed that he stormed at the waiter, speaking to him, according to the waiter's evidence, "very strong." Here again the committee, to whom it was referred, sided with the waiter.

There was no provision for smoking in the original club-house of the Oriental, and permission to

smoke within the walls was not accorded for some forty years, although it was a constant source of dispute between opposing factions.

There are about thirty portraits in the Oriental Club ; several of them of a high class have been copied for public buildings and institutions in India, where the individuals portrayed passed most of their careers.

The Iron Duke, Lords Clive, Cornwallis, Wellesley, Lake, Hastings, Gough, Warren Hastings, Major - General Stringer Lawrence, Sir John Malcolm, Sir Henry Pottinger, Sir David Ochterlony, and Sir James Outram are amongst the distinguished men whose portraits adorn this club, which also possesses a painting of considerable historical interest, representing the surrender to Marquis Cornwallis of the sons of Tippoo as hostages for the fulfilment of the treaty of 1792. This was painted by Walter Brown in 1793, and presented to the club in 1883 by O. C. V. Aldis, Esq.

Besides paintings and busts which have been presented, there is here a silver snuff-box, the gift of a member, and a handsome silver candelabrum presented to the club by Mr. John Rutherford on the completion of fifty years of membership in 1880.

In the Strangers' Dining-Room hangs a stag-hunt by Snyders, the figures by Rubens. The busts in this club include Sir Henry Taylor, by D. Brucciani ; and Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, by Baron Marochetti ; whilst a curious coloured print after P. Carpenter shows the ground of the Calcutta Cricket Club on January 15, 1861. A number of fine heads and sporting trophies presented by members decorate the

interior of the house. It should be added that the library at the Oriental, though not a large one, is of considerable interest, as many of its books have been written and presented by members.

Though the St. James' Club, at 106 Piccadilly, was not, like the Travellers' and the Oriental, founded for those who wander far afield, its membership, owing to the club's connection with diplomacy, generally embraces many with an intimate knowledge of foreign countries, and even the Far East.

The club-house of the St. James' was formerly the abode of the Coventry Club, a somewhat Bohemian institution, where there was a good deal of gambling and a free supper. It seems to have been an amusing place, to which many diplomatists belonged. This club was established at 106 Piccadilly—formerly Coventry House—in the early fifties of the last century, and lasted a very short time, being closed in March 1854. In 1860 the house became the residence of Count Flahaut, the French Ambassador, who added the eagles now to be seen amidst the decorations of the dining-room ceiling of the present St. James' Club.

The fine mansion was originally built for Sir Hugh Hunlock by the architect Kent, on the site of the old Greyhound Inn, and was bought by the Earl of Coventry, in 1764, for £10,000, subject to the ground-rent of £75 per annum. Sir Hugh must have found the expenses of completing the house too much for him, for he does not seem ever to have lived there, and, according to tradition, Lord Coventry bought the building before the roof was on.

Nevertheless a relic of Sir Hugh still remains in the area, and may be seen from Piccadilly ; this is a very fine leaden eighteenth-century cistern, which is embellished with some moulding of good design and the letters " H. H., 1761."

It is said that when the house was built it was the only mansion standing west of Devonshire House.

Up to 1889 there were no pictures or engravings in the St. James' Club, but in that year, when considerable additions were made at the back of the building, a number of prints were presented by the various embassies and legations. The most valuable gift received was a water-colour drawing by Turner of the village of Clunie, near Lausanne, given by the late Sir Julian Goldsmid. Some fine heads, a picture by Herbert Schmalz, and more prints were presented by other members. A certain number of bedrooms exist for the use of the members, and from the point of view of comfort the club leaves very little to be desired.

The principal artistic feature of interest in the house is the magnificent ceiling in the large dining-room, which is enriched with a number of small paintings by Angelica Kauffmann. The centre painting is surrounded by a number of cartouches set amidst a decorative design of considerable artistic merit, probably the work of the brothers Adam.

Here and in the adjoining smaller dining-room (where, most sensibly, smoking is allowed after lunch and dinner) hang modern chandeliers of admirable design. Both rooms were judiciously restored twelve years ago, at which time some fine mahogany doors were rescued from the rubbish heap.

Special features of Coventry House in old days were two octagon rooms, both of which had fine marble mantelpieces (now covered up) immediately beneath windows. The octagon room on the first-floor—a boudoir—was, as its remains still show, a triumph of eighteenth-century ornamentation. Indeed, the exquisite taste exhibited on the walls, over-door, and ceiling, give great cause for regret that such a perfect example of English art should have been defaced in order to form the serving-room which it now is. The carpet had been worked by Barbara, Countess of Coventry, wife of the original owner of the mansion; and when the house ceased to belong to the Coventry family, they took with them this carpet, which in course of time was divided into two, the separate portions going to different branches. The portion belonging to the present Earl was some years ago once more completed by the addition of a new half worked at the School of Art Needlework, and now forms the centre of the drawing-room carpet at Croome.

Worked in cross-stitch, it is of many colours on a neutral-tinted ground; garlands and wreaths tied up with ribbons form part of the design of this curious heirloom, which has been comparatively uninjured by time.

In connection with the St. James' Club, it should be added that, according to tradition, an underground passage once ran beneath Piccadilly into the Park opposite, where the Lady Coventry who has just been mentioned is supposed to have had a garden. This story was probably suggested by the fact that the Ranger's Lodge was nearly opposite,

and it is possible that there was some communication between that structure and Coventry House.

The St. James' is one of the most agreeable and sociable clubs in London, and still maintains much of that spirit of vitality which seems within the last two decades to have deserted so many London clubs.

In the early days of the St. James' it was located in Bennett Street, St. James', and was later moved to No. 4 Grafton Street, now the abode of the New Club. This is a fine old house, which still retains some of the features it possessed when it was the residence of Lord Brougham.

In the same house in Bennett Street first originated the Turf Club, which was evolved from the Arlington.

Of the Turf, which is probably the most exclusive club in London, there is little to be said ; for it is of quite modern foundation, and the club-house, though comfortable in the extreme, has no particular interest from an artistic point of view. Like the Athenæum, the Turf employs a design taken from an antique gem on its notepaper, a centaur having very appropriately been chosen.

The lighting of the Turf was formerly by candles set in the chandeliers. The latter still remain, but, now that electric light is used, the candles are no longer lighted.

Another fashionable club is the Marlborough, opposite Marlborough House in Pall Mall. This was originally founded as a club where members should not be restricted in their indulgence in tobacco at a time when a number of regulations

as to this habit existed in other clubs. King Edward VII, then Prince of Wales, interested himself in the foundation of the Marlborough Club, having sympathized, it was understood, with the attempt made in 1866 to modify a rule at White's which forbade smoking in the drawing-room. The motion was defeated by a majority of twenty-three votes, for the old school were bitterly opposed to such an innovation. In consequence, the Prince, though remaining an honorary member, ceased to use the club, the newly-founded Marlborough proving more congenial to his tastes.

At the present day the Marlborough is used chiefly as a lunching club. At night, like many other clubs, it is now generally more or less empty.

The club-house, being quite modern, contains little to call for mention. In a former club, however, which stood on the same site, there was in the days of high play a special room downstairs where money-lenders used to interview such members as necessity had made their clients. The room in question was known as the "Jerusalem Chamber."

The club-house of the Isthmian, at No. 105 Piccadilly, has known many vicissitudes. At one time it was the Pulteney Hotel, and afterwards it became the abode of Lord Hertford. Subsequently the house passed into the hands of the late Sir Julian Goldsmid, who possessed an example of the work of every living Royal Academician, as well as master-pieces by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Romney. His collection of works of art was very fine.

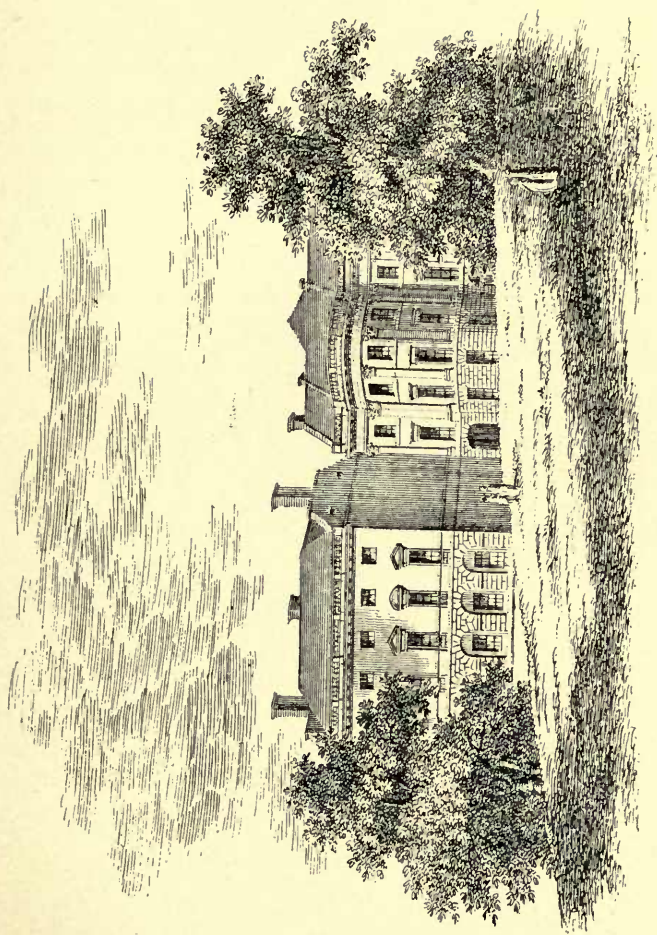
In its early days, when the club-house was in

Grafton Street, the Isthmian was nicknamed the "Crèche." It was originally founded as a club for public-school men, and some of its members were very young—a fact which gave rise to the humorous appellation in question. From Grafton Street this club migrated to Walsingham House, where it remained until that short-lived building was pulled down to make way for the palatial Ritz Hotel.

The Isthmian, it should be added, following the example of two or three other modern clubs, reserves a portion of its club-house for the entertainment of ladies, who are allotted a special entrance of their own in Brick Street.

The nickname of the "Crèche" applied to the Isthmian in its early days was rather exceptional in its wit, for most of the attempts at humorous club names have missed their mark. Another amusing instance, however, was a suggested title for the now long-defunct Lotus, an institution which was founded for the lighter forms of social intercourse between ladies of the then flourishing burlesque stage and men about town. This was the "Frou-Frou"—a delicate allusion alike to the principal founder, Mr. Russell, and the fairer portion of the membership.

A pleasant social club which has recently been structurally improved, bedrooms having been added, is the Windham, No. 11 St. James's Square. This club owes its name to the fact that the mansion was once the residence of William Windham, who was considered a model of the true English gentleman of his day. Though William Windham was a great supporter of old English sports, including



OLD MANSIONS IN PICCADILLY, NOW CLUBS.

From a drawing of 1807.

bull-baiting (which he defended with such success in the House of Commons that only after his death could a Bill against it be passed), he was at the same time an accomplished scholar and mathematician. Dr. Johnson, writing of a visit which Windham paid him, said : " Such conversation I shall not have again till I come back to the regions of literature, and there Windham is '*inter stellas luna minores*.' "

In this house also lived the accomplished John, Duke of Roxburghe ; and here the Roxburghe Library was sold in 1812. Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough lived in the mansion in 1814, and subsequently it was occupied by the Earl of Blessington, who possessed a fine collection of pictures. The Windham, it should be added, was founded by Lord Nugent for those connected with each other by a common bond of literary or personal acquaintance.

The club-house, which is very comfortable, contains a number of prints, but, as the vast majority of these are modern, they scarcely call for mention.

The Bachelors', at the corner of Piccadilly and Park Lane, is essentially a young man's club. Only bachelors can be elected, and any member who becomes a Benedict must submit himself to the ballot in order to be permitted to remain a member, being also obliged to pay a fine of £25. Ladies may be introduced as visitors, but, it is almost needless to add, their introducer is responsible for his guests being of a standing eligible for presentation at Court.

The same hospitable usage prevails at the Orleans in King Street, a pleasant little club decorated with

sporting engravings, which has always prided itself upon the excellence of its cuisine.

The Wellington, like the Bachelors' and Orleans, is another sociable club which offers its members the privilege of entertaining ladies in a portion of the building specially set aside for their use. In the club-house is a collection of fine heads, trophies of the successful big-game shooting expeditions of sporting members.

A long-established non-political club, essentially English in tone, is the Union, at the south-west angle of Trafalgar Square. The original home of this club was Cumberland House, where it was first started in 1805, the chairman then being the Marquis of Headfort. George Raggett, well known as the manager of White's, became club-master in 1807, and at that time the membership was not to be less than 250. The Dukes of Sussex and York, together with Byron and a number of other well-known men, joined the club in 1812. Nine years later it was decided to reconstitute the club and to build a new club-house, and Sir Robert Peel and four other members of the committee selected the present site. By that time the membership had increased to 800, and it was the first members' club in London. The fine club-house in Trafalgar Square, built by Sir Robert Smirke, R.A., was opened in 1824. A most comfortable club, the Union well maintains its long-established reputation for good English fare and carefully selected wines. In old days its haunch of mutton and apple tart were widely celebrated, and many gourmets belonged to it. Amongst these was Sir James Aylott, a two-bottle man, who was one

day shocked to observe James Smith (part author of "The Rejected Addresses") with half a pint of sherry before him. After eyeing the modest bottle with contempt, Aylott at last burst out with: "So I see you have taken to those d——d life-preservers!"

Most of the furniture at the Union is that supplied by Dowbiggin, the celebrated upholsterer, seventy or eighty years ago, and there are some good clocks by the royal clockmaker, Vulliamy. A good deal of the club plate is silver bearing the date 1822, and there is a good library. No pictures hang on the walls. The Union has been, ever since its institution, an abode of solid comfort, and it prides itself upon keeping up the old traditions of a London club-house as these were understood a century ago.

Amongst London's political clubs, the Carlton unquestionably takes the first place. Originally founded by the great Duke of Wellington and a few of his most intimate political friends, it was first established in Charles Street, St. James's, in the year 1831. In the following year it removed to larger premises, Lord Kensington's, in Carlton Gardens. In 1836 an entirely new club-house was built in Pall Mall by Sir Robert Smirke, R.A.; this was small, and soon became inadequate to its wants, though a very large addition was made to it in 1846 by Mr. Sydney Smirke, who in 1854 rebuilt the whole house, copying Sansovino's Library of St. Mark at Venice.

This club contains members of every kind of Conservatism, many of them men of high position in fortune and politics.

The Carlton has been the scene of many important political consultations and combinations.

It was in the hall here that Lord Randolph Churchill learnt of the appointment of Mr. Goschen to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, which, it is said, he had just resigned under the impression that, being the only possible man for the position, he would be begged to reconsider his decision.

He was in the hall with a friend, when a boy came through to put up a slip of telegraphic news. Lord Randolph stopped him and read the telegram, after which he said: "All great men make mistakes! Napoleon forgot Blücher—I forgot Goschen."

A well-known figure at the Carlton some years ago was Mr. Andrew Montagu, known to his intimate friends as "the Little Squire," whose death created a considerable sensation; for, as was well known, he had rendered great financial assistance to his party. He had, indeed, played a more important part in the secret history of his own times than was realized by the outside world. It has been asserted that about two millions of his money was out on mortgage—partly advanced to important politicians, and partly distributed amongst institutions connected with Tory organizations. Mr. Montagu was a most generous and open-handed man, and would always use his interest to assist young aspirants to place and position, though he himself cared nothing for these. He was, it is said, frequently offered a peerage; but as the particular title which he desired was claimed by someone else, to whom it was eventually given, he died plain

Mr. Montagu, which he had been perfectly content to remain.

The library upstairs contains a large number of volumes, and a most complete collection of books necessary to the politician. Smoking is allowed in the larger room, but not in the small library adjoining.

A number of oil-paintings representing celebrated Conservative statesmen decorate the walls of the Carlton. In the large entrance hall are portraits of Lord North, Lord Chatham, Lord Castlereagh, and the great Sir Robert Peel; on the staircase a portrait of the first Lord Cranbrook; whilst the first floor is adorned by fine full-length pictures of the late Lord Salisbury by Sir Hubert Herkomer, and of Lord Abergavenny by Mr. Mark Milbanke. The dining-room at the Carlton also contains several portraits, amongst them Lord Beaconsfield,* after Millais. Mr. Balfour, by Sargent, subscribed for by members, has been added within recent years. Owing to an entirely new scheme of colour decoration, the interior of this club-house is now very much improved. The conversion of the great central hall into a comfortable carpeted lounge with chairs is also an innovation of a most convenient kind.

The Carlton possesses a quantity of good silver, and in the way of comfort stands in front of almost all clubs in the world. Nowhere, perhaps, are the minor details of everyday life so well looked after; every kind of notepaper is at the command of members, whilst the facilities for reference are un-

* One of the dining-room chairs bears the inscription:
“ Lord Beaconsfield’s chair.”

equalled. This club has a fine library, which is presided over by a librarian.

Perhaps the most prosperous club in London is the Junior Carlton, which owns its own freehold. The property is said to be worth over £200,000. This palatial club-house is modern in style, but in a small room off the hall is a fine old mantelpiece, which was originally in one of the houses pulled down to make way for the new building.

Statues of Lord Beaconsfield and the fourteenth Earl of Derby decorate the hall, whilst the pictures in the club-house include full-length portraits of the late Queen Victoria by Sir Hubert Herkomer, and of the late King Edward by the Hon. A. Stuart-Wortley. This was painted when the King was Prince of Wales. In the smoking-room hang portraits of Lord Beaconsfield, Lord Derby, Lord Abergavenny, the Iron Duke, and other statesmen. A few pictures also hang on the staircase and elsewhere.

The picture of the Duke of Wellington originally represented him standing in the House of Lords, but for some reason or other the background of benches was painted out by the artist. Within recent years, however, the Upper Chamber has once more asserted itself by bursting through the coat of paint.

The library at the Junior Carlton Club is one of the most delightful rooms in London—an abode of restful peace which was highly appreciated by the late Lord Salisbury, who was often to be observed here reading. It was said that he frequented this room because he was sure of finding undisturbed

quiet. Huge placards, on which are printed the word "SILENCE," are on each of the mantelpieces, and the reposeful atmosphere of the place is seldom troubled by any sound louder than footfalls on the soft carpet or the turning over of book-leaves.

A round table in this club, used for private dinner-parties, is said to be the biggest in London ; twenty-five people can sit at it.

The Conservative Club, which occupies a portion of the site of the old Thatched House Tavern (pulled down in 1843), 74 St. James's Street, was designed by Sydney Smirke and George Basevi, 1845. The upper portion is Corinthian, with columns and pilasters, and a frieze sculptured with the imperial crown and oak wreaths ; the lower order is Roman-Doric, and the wings are slightly advanced, with an enriched entrance porch north and a bay-window south. The interior was painted in colour by Mr. Sang, by whom, after long years, it has since been redecorated. This happened a few years ago, when, after considerable discussion, it was decided to restore the original scheme of decoration which some little time before had been discarded in favour of plain white marble.

A bust of the late Queen Victoria is on the landing of the very handsome staircase of the Conservative Club, and on the first-floor are other busts, together with a full-length statue of Lord Beaconsfield. A picture of the Piazza San Marco at Venice, by Canaletto, hangs in the large smoking-room upstairs.

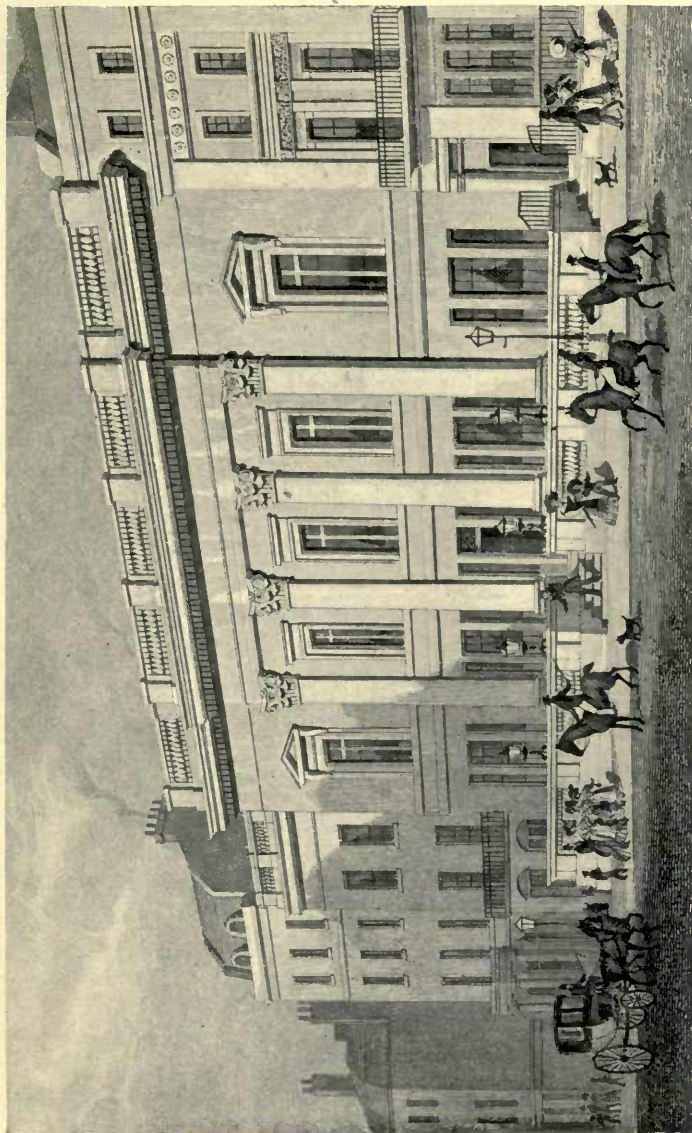
A feature of this club is the excellent library,

which is especially rich in county histories. It is a quiet, restful room, and has everything necessary to render it an ideal resort for lovers of books.

The dining-tables in the Conservative Club date from its foundation, and are of mahogany. The pleasing old custom of removing the tablecloth after dinner still prevails. Unfortunately, about eleven years ago the great majority of these little tables were sent to have their surfaces planed down ! The committee of that day (who must have been totally devoid of any vestige of taste) were of opinion that the surface was becoming too "old-looking." The result is, that it will require a great number of years before these tables regain the beautiful *patine* which still distinguishes those—about eight in number—which happily escaped renovation.

The Devonshire Club, in St. James's Street, though originally a Liberal or rather a Whig Club, now includes many shades of opinion, Liberal Unionists being plentiful. There is a good library here. The club-house, it is interesting to remember, was once a magnificent Temple of Chance, over which presided the celebrated Crockford.

The present building is, with some alterations, the same as the one constructed in 1827—on the site of three houses then demolished—for the famous ex-fishmonger by the brothers Wyatt. The decorations alone, it is said, cost £94,000, and consist of two wings and a centre, with four Corinthian pilasters and entablature, and a balustrade throughout ; the ground-floor has Venetian windows, and the upper story large



CROCKFORD'S IN 1828.

From a drawing by T. H. Shepherd.

French windows. The entrance hall has a screen of Roman-Ionic scagliola columns with gilt capitals, and a cupola of gilding and stained glass. The staircase was panelled with scagliola, and enriched with Corinthian columns. The grand drawing-room was in the style of Louis Quatorze, as it was understood at that day; its ceiling had enrichments of bronze-gilt, with door paintings à la Watteau. Upon the opening of the club-house, it was described as "the New Pandemonium." The gambling-room (now the dining-room of the Devonshire Club) consisted of four chambers: the first an anteroom, opening to a saloon embellished to a high degree; out of it a small curiously-formed cabinet or boudoir, opening to the supper-room. All these rooms were panelled in the most gorgeous manner, spaces being adorned with mirrors, silk or gold enrichments, and the ceilings as gorgeous as the walls. A billiard-room on the upper floor completed the number of apartments professedly dedicated to the use of the members. Whenever any secret manœuvre was to be carried on, there were smaller and more retired places, whose walls might be relied upon to tell no tales.

Crockford, next to the late M. Blanc, of Monte Carlo fame, was probably the most efficient manager of a gambling establishment who ever existed.

He possessed great tact, and thoroughly understood how to humour his clients, most of whose money eventually drifted into his pockets.

A newly-elected member one night, during a lull in play, jokingly said to Crockford: "I will bet a

sovereign against the choice of your pictures, of which there are many hanging round the walls, that I throw in six mains." To this he consented. The member took the box, and threw in seven times successively, and then walked round the room to make his selection. There was a St. Cecilia, by Westall, which he had before admired, and that he chose, which of course provoked a good deal of laughter. Other members then followed his example; the result being that they won several of the oil-paintings, which they bore triumphantly away.

The cook, Louis Eustache Ude, was celebrated throughout Europe, as was his successor Francatelli. Crockford's policy was to run his establishment on the most luxurious lines, making no profit except on the gambling; and therefore the dinners, though perfect, were very reasonable in price. In addition, all the dainties of the season, fish, flesh, and fowl, were cooked after the most approved Parisian models, and were tortured into shapes that defied recognition. One of the favourite dishes was Boudin de cerises à la Bentinck—cherry pudding without the stones—which was named after Lord George, a frequent visitor to the club. No one was charged for ale or porter, until one day a hungry member dined off the joint and drank three pints of bottled ale, after which Crockford made a change in the charges, with the remark that "a glass or two was all very well, but three pints were too much of a good thing."

On one occasion, in the list of game on August 10, appeared some grouse. The Marquis of Queens-

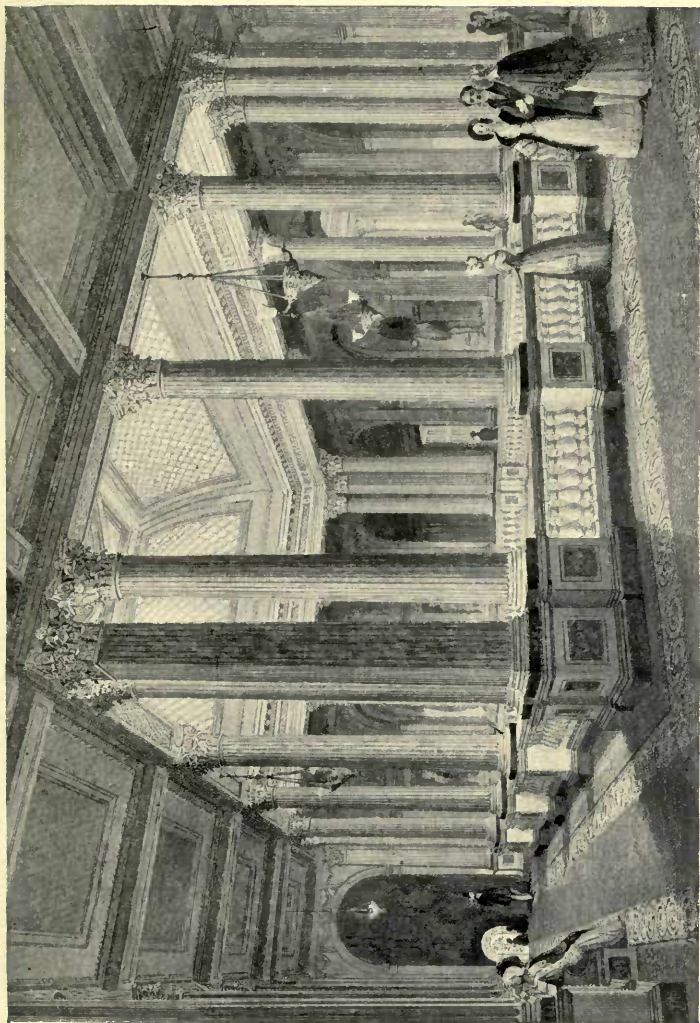
berry, a great sportsman, summoned Ude to Bow Street, and had him fined for infringing the Game Laws. The following day Lord Queensberry looked at the bill of fare, and no grouse appeared in it. He was about to sit down to dinner, when a friend came in, who proposed joining him. Each selected his own dishes. When they were served, there was a slight hesitation in Ude's manner, but they attributed it to the fine he had recently paid. An entrée followed some excellent soup and fish, Ude saying, "This is my lord's," uncovering a dish containing a mutton cutlet à la soubise, "and this Sir John's," placing the latter as far from the noble Marquis as possible. "Have a cutlet," said Lord Queensberry. The Baronet assented. "And you in return can have some of my entrée." At last it came to the moment when Sir John's dish was to be uncovered. "What on earth is this?" asked Ude's prosecutor, as he took up a leg of the salmis; "it cannot be partridge or pheasant; bring the bill of fare." The waiter obeyed. "Why, what does this mean? 'Salmis de fruit défendu!'—grouse, I verily believe." Ude apologized, declaring that the grouse had been in the house before he was summoned. The Marquis chose to believe his statement, and allowed the matter to drop.

Some members were very particular and trying to the patience of the world-famed French cook. At one period of his presidency, the ground of a complaint formally addressed to the committee was that there was an admixture of onion in the soubise. This chef was sensitive as to complaints,

Colonel Damer, happening to enter Crockford's one evening to dine early, found Ude walking up and down in a towering passion, and naturally inquired what was the matter. "No matter, Monsieur le Colonel! Did you see that gentleman who has just gone out? Well, he ordered a red mullet for his dinner. I made him a delicious little sauce with my own hands. The price of the mullet was marked as two shillings, and I asked sixpence for the sauce; this he refuses to pay. The imbecile must think that the red mullets come out of the sea with my sauce in their pockets."

The Devonshire Club possesses some relics of Crockford's in the shape of an etching by R. Seymour, which hangs in the corridor smoking-room, where are also six of the original chairs used in the old gaming-room. The etching of Crockford was presented by Captain Shean; the chairs, in 1902, by another member—Mr. T. J. Barratt.

The Reform Club, in Pall Mall, took its name from the great Reform movement, which it was founded to promote, in opposition to the Carlton. Its virtual founder and first chairman was Edward Ellice, who drew his wealth from the Hudson Bay Company, and his political influence from his long representation of Coventry and from his energy in supporting Reform. It was said that he had more to do with the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832 than any other man. The club was established in 1836, to be a nursery of the great political idea which that Bill represented. For a few years it was domiciled in Gwydyr House, Whitehall. At the house in Pall Mall, some years previously, the



INTERIOR OF THE REFORM CLUB.

From a drawing of 1841.

temporary National Gallery had remained in the house of Mr. Angerstein, whose pictures were the nucleus of the national collection. While, therefore, the Reform Club was rising to accommodate its members, the National Gallery was being built in Trafalgar Square to receive the pictures.

The architect of the new building was instructed to do his best to produce a club-house finer than any yet built. The Reform is mostly Italian in style, copied by Barry in some respects from the Farnese Palace at Rome, designed by Michael Angelo. The chief feature of the interior is a hall running up to the top of the building, an Italian cortile surrounded by a colonnade, half Ionic and half Corinthian. The Reform is about the only one of the older clubs which provides bedrooms for its members—a convenience much appreciated by members.

Let into the walls of this hall are a number of portraits of Liberal politicians of the past. Amongst them are Bright and Palmerston. There are also some busts of former great lights of the party, such as Mr. Gladstone. A graceful statue of Elektra is another conspicuous ornament of this well-proportioned hall.

Like the Carlton, the Reform Club possesses a quantity of silver plate, dating from the time of its foundation.

The kitchen of the Reform was long presided over by Alexis Soyer, one of the great cooks of history. He came to England on a visit to his brother, who was chef to the old Duke of Cambridge, son of George III, and afterwards was cook to

several noblemen, till eventually appointed chef of the club. Soyer created a great sensation in culinary circles by introducing steam and gas. He cooked some famous political banquets for the club, among them a dinner to O'Connell, another to Ibrahim Pasha, and a third to Lord Palmerston. Soyer, indeed, became quite a public character, being sent to Ireland during the great famine, to teach the starving people how to dine on little or nothing; and at the worst period of the Crimean winter it was hoped he might make amends for a defective commissariat.

Madame Soyer was as clever as her husband in another line: a woman of considerable artistic attainments, she painted quite prettily in water-colours.

Both she and the great chef sleep their last sleep in Kensal Green Cemetery, where a sort of mausoleum bears the appropriate inscription: "Soyer tranquil."

One of the Reform Club's triumphs was the breakfast given there on the occasion of the Queen's Coronation, which won high commendation. The excellent cooking imparted celebrity to the great political banquets given at the Reform.

Soyer was a man of discrimination, taste, and genius. He was led to conceive the idea of his great book on cookery—"Gastronomic Regeneration"—he declared, by observing in the elegant library of an accomplished nobleman the works of Shakespeare, Milton, and Johnson, in gorgeous bindings, but wholly dust-clad and overlooked, while a book on cookery bore every indication of

being daily consulted and revered. "This is fame," exclaimed Soyer, seizing the happy inference, and forthwith seized his pen.

John Bright was often at the Reform, where it was said he passed his time indulging in billiards and abstaining from wine. Other well-known men who were members were Douglas Jerrold, Sala, William Black, James Payn, and Thackeray, who became a member in 1840. He used to stand in the smoking-room, his back to the fire, his legs rather wide apart, his hands thrust into his trousers pockets, and his head stiffly thrown backward, while he joined in the talk of the men occupying the semicircle of chairs in front of him. It is said that on one occasion, observing beans and bacon on the evening dinner list, he cancelled without hesitation a dinner engagement elsewhere, on the ground that "he had met an old friend he had not seen for many a long day."

At one time a small group of men, which Bernal Osborne nicknamed "the press gang," met daily for lunch at a table in one of the windows looking out upon the gardens in front of Carlton Terrace. This group was originally composed of James Payn and William Black, J. R. Robinson of the *Daily News*, J. C. Parkinson, and Sir T. Wemyss Reid, but as time went on others joined. At these luncheons there was always a great deal of pleasant and harmless chaff, with some more serious talk, although by mutual agreement politics were generally tabooed. James Payn was the life and soul of the party, and dedicated one of the best of his novels—"By Proxy"—to the group which he had

so often enlivened. Another lively spirit here was William Black, who, though not as brilliant a talker as Payn, could cap his jests with an epigram or quaint joke of much flavour.

Bernal Osborne occasionally attended these lunches, where, however, he curbed that mordant wit which was known to all and feared by most. At the Reform lunches he was always harmless, though unable to resist referring to Black's habit of drinking a pint of champagne at luncheon. He would point to the bottle, and say: "Young man, in ten years' time you will not be doing that." Ten years later, however, Black recalled Bernal Osborne's warnings, and dwelt with pride upon the fact that he had survived his censor.

The very large political clubs, such as the Constitutional, the Junior Constitutional, and the National Liberal, hardly come within the scope of this book. It may, however, be mentioned that, whilst the National Liberal has an ingeniously contrived system (the idea of which was originally conceived by Mr. Arthur Williams, sometime M.P. for Glamorgan) whereby very young men are attracted to join the club, nothing of the sort seems to have been attempted by any similar institution purporting to further the spread of Conservative principles.

CHAPTER IX

THE NATIONAL — OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE —
UNITED UNIVERSITY—NEW UNIVERSITY—NEW
OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE—UNITED SERVICE—
ARMY AND NAVY—NAVAL AND MILITARY—
GUARDS—ROYAL NAVAL CLUB—CALEDONIAN
—JUNIOR ATHENÆUM

ABOUT the most valuable artistic possession owned by any London club is the fine set of Flemish tapestries in the drawing-room of the National Club, 1 Whitehall Gardens. These were acquired with the club-house in 1845 from Lord Ailsa, who had bought them in Belgium shortly after Waterloo. The price paid was very moderate—£200—and at the present time the tapestries in question are in all probability worth over ten times as much.

A curious and interesting feature at the National is the building which now serves as a billiard-room ; careful inspection reveals that in the days before the construction of the Thames Embankment this was a boat-house, up to which water flowed. An old member of the club perfectly remembers barges coming up the river and unloading the bricks with which an additional story was built.

The National Club was originally founded for those holding strongly Evangelical views ; the late

Lord Shaftesbury, of philanthropic fame, was a member, and to it some staunch pillars of Protestantism still belong. Of recent years a number of Government officials and literary men have somewhat relieved the austerity of tone which formerly prevailed, but the National yet adheres to most of the practices instituted at its foundation, and remains the only club where morning and evening prayers are regularly read.

The tone of the National is rather more intellectual than that of the majority of West End clubs. It somewhat resembles that of the grave institutions frequented by Deans and Bishops, where the membership is limited to those who have been at one of the great Universities.

Of such clubs, the best known is the Oxford and Cambridge, which was originally started, in 1830, at a meeting presided over by Lord Palmerston at the British Coffee-house, in Cockspur Street. The club's first home was a house in St. James's Square, where it remained till suitable premises were built, in 1836-37, on the Crown property in Pall Mall. These premises it still occupies. The architects were Sir Robert Smirke and his brother Sydney, who produced an imposing façade on Pall Mall, with very rich ornamental details. In panels over the upper windows, seven in number, are arranged several bas-reliefs, executed by Mr. Nicholl, who was also employed on those of the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge. The subject of that at the east end of the building is Homer; then follow Bacon and Shakespeare. The centre panel contains a group of Apollo and the Muses, with Minerva on

his right hand, and a female, personifying the fountain Hippocrene, on his left. The three remaining panels represent Milton, Newton, and Virgil.

In addition to many ordinary amenities of club-life, two chief attractions here are the fine library and the excellent cellar, which enjoys a well-deserved reputation for fine claret.

The United University Club, the entrance of which is in Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, was originally housed in a building constructed by W. Wilkins, R.A., and J. P. Gandy, in 1826. An upper floor, with a smoking-room, was added in 1852. A few years ago, however, the club-house was entirely rebuilt from designs by Blomfield, the new club-house being a sort of compromise between the Adam and Louis Seize styles. A feature of this club is the very interesting collection of Oxford University Calendars, with ornately engraved views and scenes, many of them highly picturesque and quaint. The smoking-room also contains a number of views of colleges, whilst in the dining-room hang portraits in oil of the first Duke of Wellington, Lord Melbourne, and Mr. Gladstone. Membership of this club is limited to 1,000—500 of the University of Oxford, and 500 of the University of Cambridge.

This was Mr. Gladstone's favourite club, where he might sometimes have been seen partaking of a simple dinner, his attention divided between a chop and some learned work.

Members of this club must have taken a degree at one of the two great Universities, and many distinguished men have belonged to it—the Church and the Bar being generally well represented.

The New University Club, in St. James's Street, built by Alfred Waterhouse, R.A., in 1868, and the New Oxford and Cambridge, in Pall Mall, are also flourishing institutions, which, however, do not appear to contain any pictures or *objets d'art* of conspicuous interest.

Amongst the most important clubs of London are those used by the military. In old days most officers spent a good deal of time in London, many leading a life of luxurious ease. A curious incident illustrating this occurred in 1858.

In that year, on the occasion of one of the regiments of the Life Guards being ordered to take part in a course of instruction at Aldershot, a wealthy Captain tendered his resignation. The Commander-in-Chief, however, declined to accept it, and eventually the gallant Captain was persuaded by his Colonel to remain in the regiment, and undergo for a short period the vicissitudes of camp life. At that time it was with some difficulty that officers could be obtained for the Household Cavalry, for to be a military man was often much the same thing as being a man of pleasure. Clubs were thronged with officers at certain times of the year. Though this state of affairs has passed away, the service clubs still retain their popularity. Excellent management distinguishes these institutions, of which the first to be established was the United Service. This was founded in May 1831, as the General Military Club for naval and military officers, by Sir Thomas Graham (afterwards Lord Lynedoch), Lord Hill, and some other officers. Naval men, however, were admitted in the following year,

when the name was changed. At first it was only open to officers of field rank, beginning with a Major in the army, and the corresponding rank of Commander in the navy. The club's original abode was in Charles Street, St. James's; the site of the present premises in Pall Mall was obtained ten years later on a ninety years' lease from the Crown. The old club-house was then sold to the new Junior United Service Club for £17,442, which considerable sum went to defray the cost of the new building in Pall Mall. This, with furniture, amounted to £49,743. Nash was the architect, and it was finished in November 1828. An addition was made about 1858 by the acquisition of the lease of the adjoining site, the sum of £34,000 being spent in connecting it with the older house and adapting it for the purposes of a club.

The club-house is a fine building with a classical portico in the front facing Pall Mall. The interior is well planned, and is a good specimen of the style popular in Nash's day. The Senior and Junior United Service, with the Army and Navy, or "Rag," once received the three nicknames of "Cripplegate," "Billingsgate," and "Hellgate"—the first from the prevailing advanced years and infirmity of its members; the second on account of the supposed tendencies of certain officers who followed the traditions of the army which "swore in Flanders"; and the last from its love of high play.

The United Service contains many interesting pictures and some statuary, the most striking example of which, in the entrance hall, is a colossal

bust of the Duke of Wellington, by Pistrucci. Six other busts represent Lord Seaton, by G. G. Adam; King William IV, by Joseph; Nelson, by Flaxman; Sir Henry Keppel, by H.S.H. Prince Victor of Hohenlohe - Langenburg; and Lieutenant-General Lord Cardigan, by Marochetti (the gift of his widow). The sculptor of the sixth bust, representing Admiral Sir Thomas M. Hardy, Bart., is unknown.

The pictures in the morning-, coffee-, and smoking-rooms include the following portraits: Admiral Viscount Exmouth (a copy by S. Lane, after Lawrence); General Sir John Moore (a copy by W. Robinson, after Lawrence); Major-General Charles G. Gordon, by Dickinson, from a photograph; Field-Marshal Lord Raglan, by F. Grant; Field-Marshal Lord Clyde (a copy by Graves, after F. Grant); Admiral Lord Rodney (a copy by Bullock, after Reynolds); Field-Marshal H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, by A. S. Cope, A.R.A.; Field-Marshal Sir John F. Burgoyne, by Graves, from a photograph; Field-Marshal Viscount Combermere, by W. Ross; Charles, fifth Duke of Richmond, K.G., by A. Baccani; John, first Duke of Marlborough, by Sir G. Kneller; Field-Marshal the Marquis of Anglesey (a copy by W. Ross, after Lawrence); General Lord Lynedoch, by Sir T. Lawrence; Admiral Lord de Saumarez, by S. Lane; General Sir James Macdonell (a copy by Say); Admiral Earl St. Vincent, by Sir W. Beechey; Admiral Sir Thomas Troubridge, Bart., by S. Drummond; Earl de Grey, by H. W. Pickersgill; Field-Marshal Viscount Gough, by Sir F. Grant,

R.A. ; Lieutenant-General Lord Saltoun, by Sir T. Lawrence ; Vice-Admiral Sir Francis Drake (a copy by Lane from an original in the possession of the donor, Sir T. T. Drake) ; General Sir Ralph Abercrombie, by Colvin Smith ; Admiral of the Fleet Sir George Cockburn, by T. Mackay ; Field-Marshal Sir Edward Blakeney, by Catterson Smith, R.H.A. ; General Viscount Beresford, by Reuben Sayers ; Field-Marshal Lord Seaton, by W. Fisher ; General Hon. Sir G. Lowry Cole (a copy by Harrison after Lawrence) ; Admiral Sir Pulteney Malcolm (a copy by Dickinson, after Lane) ; General Sir J. Frederick Love, by A. Baccani ; Field-Marshal Lord Strathnairn, by Bassano, from a photograph ; Admiral Viscount Keith (a copy by Hayes, after Saunders) ; Admiral Sir Charles Napier, by J. M. Joy ; General George Augustus Elliott, Lord Heathfield (a copy by S. Lane, after Sir T. Reynolds) ; Admiral Earl Howe (a copy by J. Harrison) ; the Emperor Napoleon I, by an unknown artist (the gift of Colonel Bivar) ; Allied Generals before Sevastopol ; Major-General Sir R. Dick, by W. Salter ; General Sir George Brown, by Werner ; Field-Marshal Lord Napier of Magdala (a replica by S. Dickenson) ; Admiral of the Fleet Sir Thomas Byam Martin, by T. Mackay.

The grand staircase is embellished by a statue of H.R.H. the Duke of York, by T. Campbell, and the following pictures : The Battle of Trafalgar, by C. Stanfield ; Admiral Lord Nelson, the head by Jackson, finished by W. Robinson ; Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington, by W. Robinson ; General Lord Hill, a replica by H. W. Pickersgill ; and

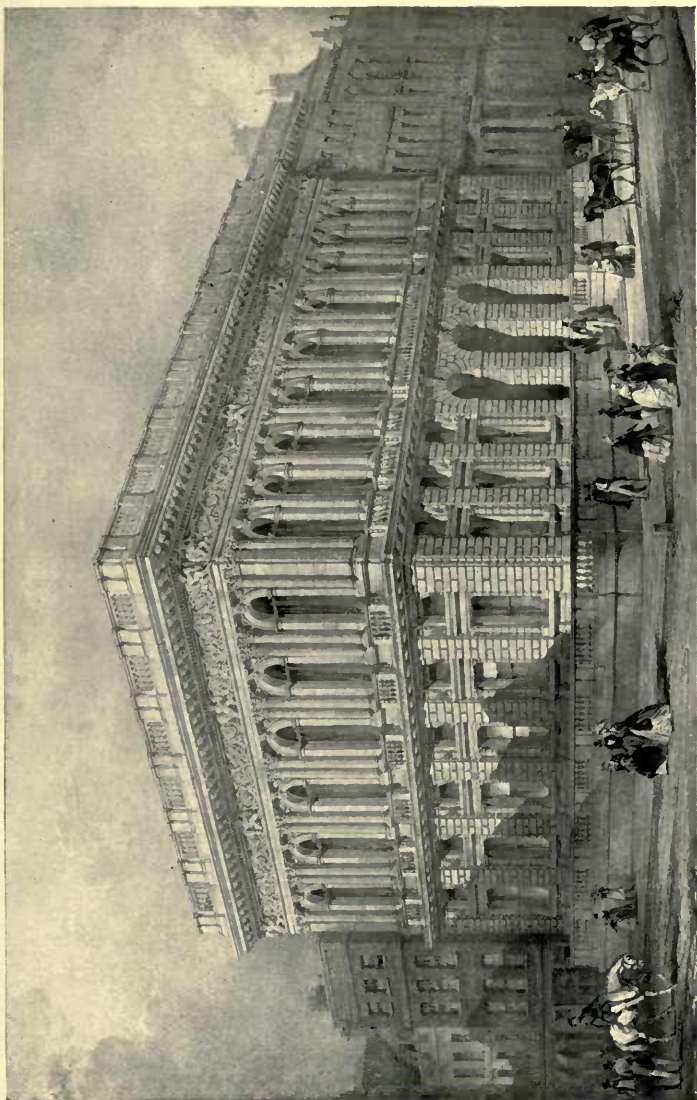
Admiral Lord Collingwood, a copy by Colvin Smith, after Owen. There is also a picture of The Battle of Waterloo, by G. Jones.

In the upper billiard-room is a picture of the Battle of Trafalgar, the frame of which is wood from the timbers of the *Victory*.

The Junior United Service Club, amongst other valuable pictures, possesses two from the brush of Sir Thomas Lawrence. Here are also a number of military relics, including the sword which Lord Hill carried at Waterloo. A more grim souvenir is some locks of hair from the heads of women and children massacred during the Indian Mutiny at Cawnpore.

Lord Kitchener and Sir John French are old members of this club.

The Army and Navy Club, in Pall Mall, known as the "Rag," possesses one of the finest club-houses in the world. It was originally established as the Army Club, but owing to a desire expressed by the Iron Duke, naval officers were admitted, and the name altered in consequence. The club-house in Pall Mall was only opened some ten years later, having been built as a copy of the Palazzo Rezzonico at Venice. The original model for the building is still in the club. Captain William Duff, of the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers, first invented the nickname of the "Rag." He was a celebrated man about town at a time when knocker-wrenching and other similar pranks were in favour; Billy Duff's exploits in such a line were notorious. Coming in to supper late one night, the refreshment obtainable appeared so meagre that he nicknamed the club the "Rag and Famish." This tickled the fancy of



THE ARMY AND NAVY CLUB.

From an early drawing.

the members, and a club button, bearing the nickname and a starving man gnawing a bone, was designed, and for a time worn by many members in evening dress. Such buttons are still made.

The original premises occupied by the Army and Navy Club, when it was opened in 1838, were at the corner of King Street and St. James's Square, in a house, then numbered 16, which in 1814 had been Lord Castlereagh's. Two doors down was the house occupied by Mrs. Boehm in 1815. This lady, who "gave fashionable balls and masquerades," was entertaining the Prince Regent at dinner when the news of the victory of Waterloo arrived. The post-chaise, containing Major Henry Percy, with the despatches, stopped first at Lord Castlereagh's, and then went on to Mrs. Boehm's. The carriage, out of the windows of which three French eagles projected, was followed by a great crowd. The site of Mrs. Boehm's house now forms part of the East India United Service Club.

Before the Army and Navy Club, another club, the Oxford and Cambridge New University, occupied No. 16. The Army and Navy remained here until the purchase of its present freehold site; but while the new house was being built it moved into No. 13, then known as Lichfield House, and the next but one to the north-west corner of the square. It was so called after the Earl of Lichfield, who was Postmaster-General in Lord Melbourne's Administration, and it was the home of the club until February 25, 1851.

The new club-house has a frontage of 80 feet in Pall Mall and 100 feet in St. James's Square. The

price of the site, together with the excavations, concreting, and so forth, amounted to £52,000 ; the building cost £54,000, and furnishing £10,000 more ; so that the total outlay on the club-house was £116,000. The architects were Messrs. Parnell and Smith, who adopted as their model the well-known Palazzo Rezzonico, which occupies a prominent position on the Grand Canal in Venice. Representations of this palace hang in various rooms of the club. The builders of the house were Messrs. Trego, Smith, and Appleford, and the first stone of the new building was laid on May 13, 1848, by Colonel Daniell, of the Coldstream Guards.

The freeholds purchased by the club included a house owned by the trustees of the Baroness de Mauley, which had formerly been in the possession of Spencer, Earl of Wilmington, and afterwards of John, Earl of Buckinghamshire. This was No. 20, St. James's Square, which had at more recent dates been occupied by the Hon. W. Ponsonby and by the Parthenon and Colonial Clubs. Other properties purchased were the freehold of Mr. Martineau, No. 3 George Street ; Nos. 36 and 37, the freehold of Mr. Malton ; Mrs. Justice's freehold, No. 38 Pall Mall ; and that of Mr. Tegart, No. 39 Pall Mall.

This club contains some interesting relics ; amongst them, in the smoking-room, is a mantelpiece from the Malmaison, carved by Canova. One of the figures supporting this, however, is modern, and the difference from the other carved by the great sculptor can be clearly discerned.

Another treasured possession of the Army and

Navy Club is the Nell Gwynn mirror, which is over the fireplace in the members' smoking-room. This was in Lord de Mauley's house, and is probably a genuine relic. A silver fruit-knife which is said to have belonged to the celebrated beauty, bearing the date 1680, has its place in the smoking-room, just below the mirror. The portrait of her by Sir Peter Lely which hangs in the same room was presented by a member, and took the place of another for years said to be Louise de Querouaille. In reality, this represents Mary of Modena.

As late as the eighteenth century the back room on the ground-floor of the old house on this site was covered with looking-glass, as was said to have been the ceiling also. Over the chimney-piece was a picture of Nell Gwynn, whilst a portrait of her sister hung in another room. The house then belonged to Thomas Brand, Esq., of the Hoo, in Hertfordshire.

The tradition that Nell Gwynn lived in the house standing on the ground now occupied by the Army and Navy Club, whilst now generally accepted, has been questioned by some. According to another tradition it was the house opposite—up to recent years used as part of the War Office—which really belonged to the Merry Monarch's favourite. This, it is said, communicated by an underground passage with the house pulled down when the present club was built. The passage was stopped up within the last fifty years.

Whether or not Nell Gwynn resided in a house on the site of which the Army and Navy Club now

stands, it is at any rate certain that part of it was connected with the grant made by Charles II to her; for among the title-deeds of the club property is a deed, dated 1725, which recites that King Charles II, by letters patent dated April 1 in the seventeenth year of his reign, gave and granted unto certain persons several pieces or parcels of ground which formed part of a field or close called Pell Mell Field, otherwise St. James's Field. This grant was made on the nomination of Henry Jermyn, Earl of St. Albans, to Baptist May and Abraham Cowley, in trust for the second Earl of St. Albans, his heirs and assigns, for ever. Evelyn records in his Diary that he saw and heard the King (Charles II) in familiar discourse with "an impudent comedian, Mrs. Nellie, as they called her," who was looking over the garden wall of a house standing on the north side of Pall Mall. The "Mall" was not then the same as the present street, but an avenue shaded by trees lying north of it, and following the line of the present south side of St. James's Square, so that a house on the north side of Pall Mall might very well occupy the position of the corner house incorporated with the club.

A constant frequenter of the Army and Navy Club in old days was Prince Louis Napoleon, afterwards the Emperor Napoleon III, who always took great interest in everything connected with it. He had known it as a young man when—an obscure and impoverished exile—he lived in a modest lodging in King Street, St. James's, in the immediate neighbourhood of the club, which

he practically made his home. Soon after his accession to power in France, he presented the club with the fine piece of tapestry which hangs on the grand staircase. This is dated 1849, the year after he became Prince President of the French Republic. It represents "The Worship of Pales," and is of Gobelins manufacture in 1784.

The Emperor ever cherished a kindly feeling for the club. When he returned to England after his downfall, he gladly resumed his honorary membership, and on his visits to town from Chislehurst he was frequently seen in the club, lunching constantly in the coffee-room, with his equerry seated opposite to him. He never failed to express a great liking for the club, because, as he said, he was always treated in it as a private person, and, except when he wished it, no particular notice was taken of him. It may be added that quite a number of interesting works of art relating to the Bonapartes are possessed by the club, and are kept in the visitors' drawing-room.

The Army and Navy Club contains what amounts to quite a collection of pictures, statuary, and works of art, some acquired by purchase, others gifts of various members of the club. In the first category is a colossal bust of Queen Victoria, by Alfred Gilbert, R.A., which is a replica of that exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1887—the Jubilee year. Another bust executed for the club, to replace one of plaster which had been broken, is that of Field-Marshal H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, the President of the club. This bust was executed by Admiral H.S.H. Prince Victor of Hohenlohe

(Count Gleichen), R.N., who was for many years, and until within a short time of his death, a member of the club. Two portraits in the inner hall—one of Queen Victoria, the other of the Duke of Wellington—were purchased by subscription.

Two interesting marble busts of T.R.H. the Prince and Princess of Wales were presented by Admiral Sir Arthur Cumming, K.C.B. The late Captain J. S. Manning, 1st Dragoon Guards, made some liberal gifts to the club, including the clock and marble case on the centre chimney-piece in the coffee-room. This member also gave several portraits, including one of the first President of the club, H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, and of Lord Nelson. Two silver snuff-boxes and a picture of the Battle of Camperdown were likewise presented by him.

In the coffee-room, panelled with portraits of distinguished officers, are two fine busts of Wellington and Nelson, both presented by members. A particularly interesting relic in the possession of the club is a miniature portrait of Lady Hamilton, which was found in Lord Nelson's cabin after his death at Trafalgar, and which was presented to the club by J. Penry Williams, Esq., late 1st Royals. The club also possesses autograph letters of Lord Nelson and of the first Duke of Wellington.

The Army and Navy started with a smoking-room at the very top of the house, but in course of time gave up first one and then a second strangers' coffee-room to lovers of tobacco. A lift has now been constructed to convey visitors to the original smoking-

room upstairs. A determined effort was made a few years back to allow smoking in the beautiful morning-room facing Pall Mall, but this was defeated by a small section of the older but fast-diminishing set opposed to smoking.

A curious feature of the Army and Navy Club is the position of a fireplace in the entrance hall, where it is under a short flight of stairs leading to the main staircase. At first sight one is puzzled to imagine where the outlet for the smoke can be. In the same club-house is another fireplace situated directly beneath a window—a most unusual but agreeable position.

In 1862 the only service clubs existing in London were the United Service, Junior United Service, and Army and Navy, which were all full. To meet the want of another, a service club—the Naval and Military—was founded in March of that year by a party of officers chiefly belonging to The Buffs, then quartered at the Tower of London. These officers were: Major W. H. Cairnes, The Buffs; Captain W. Stewart, The Buffs; Lieutenant F. T. Jones, The Buffs; Captain L. C. Barber, R.E.; and H. H. Barber, Esq., late 17th Lancers.

The club commenced with 150 members, at an entrance fee of £15 15s., a home subscription of £5 5s., and a supernumerary subscription of 10s.

The first club-house was at No. 18 Clifford Street. Soon, however, it was found too small, and at the end of 1863 a move was made to more commodious premises at No. 22 Hanover Square, where the club remained until the end of 1865. Cambridge House, full of Palmerstonian associations,

was taken in 1865, and opened in April of the next year.

On the renewal of the lease in 1876, it was determined to make the house as perfect as possible. Alterations were carried on from December of that year till April 1878, during which time the original house was entirely renovated. The structure was also enlarged, a new dining-room, billiard-rooms, offices, and cellars being added on the site of the stables and other offices.

The upper smoking-room, in which hangs a portrait of General Sir W. Nott, G.C.B., and some engravings after Hogarth, was once Lord Palmerston's bedroom, from which formerly a small semi-secret staircase led to Whitehorse Street, by which it is said foreign spies and other desirable or undesirable persons were admitted. The present card-room was Lady Palmerston's bedroom, opening into her boudoir — the octagon room, which retains a beautiful ceiling.

Mr. Gladstone used to say that Lord and Lady Palmerston once formed a Ministry in this octagon room.

The present library was the ball-room, and the State apartments were *en suite*.

The Duke of Cambridge — tenth child of George III — lived at Cambridge House till his death in 1850, the year in which Queen Victoria, who had gone to inquire after his health, was struck with a cane by Robert Pate, a retired officer, just as the royal carriage was driving out of the gate. Her bonnet was crushed over her forehead, and her cheek hurt.

Pate was transported for seven years.

A number of portraits and busts are in the Naval and Military—the Duke of Wellington ; Napoleon ; Nelson, after Hoppner ; Queen Victoria, by Winterhalter ; and George III, by Beechey. Some fine heads presented by members also decorate this club, which is one of the most comfortable and best managed in London.

An interesting feature is the roll of honour in the corridor. This bears the names of members who have lost their lives in the service of their country since the foundation of the club.

The Junior Naval and Military club, almost next door to the Naval and Military, was founded about ten years ago, and has a large membership, mostly drawn from officers of junior rank. The club-house is one of the few modern buildings in London which have a façade of excellent though restrained design. The exterior of this club affords an agreeable contrast to most buildings of recent years, being quite free from the superabundance of decoration which now disfigures so many West End thoroughfares.

The Guards' Club was established in 1813 at a house in St. James's Street, next Crockford's. The present club-house, however, was erected only as far back as 1848 ; it was built from the designs of Mr. Henry Harrison. Established for the three regiments of Foot Guards, it seems originally to have been conducted on a military system. Billiards and low whist were the only games indulged in. The dinner was, perhaps, better than at most clubs, and considerably cheaper.

The Guards' club-house in St. James's Street fell down on November 9, 1827, in consequence, it was said, of the walls being undermined in the preparation for building a foundation to the new subscription house about to be erected next door by Mr. Crockford. The following epigrammatic verses were written on this occasion :

“ ‘ Mala vicini pecoris contagia lædunt.’

What can these workmen be about ?

Do, Crockford, let the secret out,

Why thus your houses fall.

Quoth he : ‘ Since folks are not in town,

I find it better to pull down,

Than have no pull at all.’

“ See, passenger, at Crockford's high behest,
Red-coats by black-legs ousted from their nest ;
The arts of peace o'ermatching reckless war,
And gallant Rouge undone by wily Noir !

“ ‘ Impar congressus’ . . .

Fate gave the word—the king of dice and cards

In an unguarded moment took the Guards ;

Contriv'd his neighbours in a trice to drub,

And did the trick by—turning up a club.

“ ‘ Nullum simile est idem.’

'Tis strange how some will differ—some advance

That the Guards' club-house was pulled down
by chance ;

While some, with juster notions in their mazard,

Stoutly maintain the deed was done by hazard.”

The Guards' Club, it should be added, is considered as a guard-house, and can be used by officers on duty.

In St. James's Square is the East India United Service Club, which was founded in 1849. The

present club-house really consists of two mansions—Nos. 14 and 15—which were formed into one commodious and handsome building by the skill of the architect—Mr. Adam Lee. The East India United is of course an essentially Anglo-Indian club, and many distinguished officials—civil as well as military—have been members.

A number of pictures and prints are in this club-house, most of the portraits of famous Anglo-Indians being copies of originals in the India Office, National Portrait Gallery, and elsewhere.

An interesting piece of plate here is a silver vase presented by the Patriotic Fund at Lloyd's to Commodore Sir Nathaniel Dance, H.E.I.C., upon the occasion of his defeating a French squadron on February 15, 1804. This was lent to the club in October 1895, by the great-nephew of the Commodore, G. W. Dance, Esq., B.C.S.

A quite modern military club, which has prospered exceedingly, is the Cavalry, which was started in 1895 for officers who had served in the various mounted arms, English and Indian cavalry, Royal Horse Artillery, and Imperial Yeomanry. Unlike several other clubs started about the same time, it flourished, and has a membership of 1,300. Here there is a dining-room to which ladies are admitted as guests, which has no doubt contributed to the success of the club.

During the last year the comfortable club-house in Piccadilly was enlarged, and it is now capable of accommodating a larger number of members than before.

Little is ever heard of the Royal Naval Club—

one of the oldest in the world, for it originated about 1674. Many great Admirals have belonged to this convivial dining club, including Nelson, who is generally supposed to have belonged to no club. At one time these dinners were held in the large dining-room at the Thatched House, in St. James's Street, on the walls of which hung the portraits of the Dilettanti Society, illuminated by wax candles in fine old glass chandeliers.

During the present year yet another military club—the Junior Army and Navy—has opened its doors at the Clock House, Whitehall, which was originally built for Lord Carrington.

The Caledonian, in Charles Street, St. James's, also occupies a mansion which was once in private hands. The largest house in the street, it was erected in 1819 for Pascoe Grenfell, and subsequently became the property of the Beresford family, from whom it was acquired by the Caledonian Club.

The Junior Athenæum, at the corner of Dover Street, Piccadilly, like the Caledonian, was not intended for a club, having been built some sixty years ago, at a cost of £30,000, for Mr. Henry Thomas Hope, whose initial still remains upon the elaborate cast-iron railings of French design.

CHAPTER X

THE DILETTANTI—THE CLUB—COSMOPOLITAN—KIT-KAT—ROYAL SOCIETIES'—BURLINGTON FINE ARTS—ATHENÆUM—ALFRED

OF the many convivial dining clubs which once abounded in London few now survive, though the famous and venerable Dilettanti Society happily still flourishes. Its dinners are held at the Grafton Galleries, and certain quaint old usages are still maintained. A member who speaks of the Society as "the club" has to pay some petty fine, whilst the secretary when reading the minutes puts on bands. The presence of these somewhat ecclesiastical additions to costume in one of the beautiful portraits belonging to this club once caused the late Mr. Gladstone to take the picture for that of a Bishop—which aroused some merriment.

The Society was founded about 1734 by a number of gentlemen who had travelled much in Italy, and were desirous of encouraging at home a taste for those objects which had contributed so much to their intellectual gratification abroad. Accordingly they formed themselves into a Society, under the name of Dilettanti (literally, lovers of the fine arts), and agreed upon certain regulations to keep up the spirit of their scheme, which combined

friendly and social intercourse with a serious and ardent desire to promote the arts. In 1751 Mr. James Stuart ("Athenian Stuart," as he was called) and Mr. Nicholas Revett were elected members. The Society liberally assisted them in their excellent work, "The Antiquities of Athens." In fact, it was in great measure owing to the Dilettanti that, after the death of the above two eminent architects, the work was not entirely relinquished, and a large number of the plates were engraved from drawings in possession of the Society. It was mainly through the influence and patronage of the Dilettanti Society that the Royal Academy obtained its charter. In 1774 the interest of £4,000 three per cents. was appropriated by the former for the purpose of sending two students, recommended by the Royal Academy, to study in Italy or Greece for three years.

In old days the funds of the Society were greatly increased by the fines. Those paid "on increase of income, by inheritance, legacy, marriage, or preferment," were very odd—for instance, 5 guineas by Lord Grosvenor, on his marriage with Miss Leveson Gower; 11 guineas by the Duke of Bedford, on being appointed First Lord of the Admiralty; 10 guineas compounded for by Bubb Dodington, as Treasurer of the Navy; 2 guineas by the Duke of Kingston, for a coloneley of Horse (then valued at £400 per annum); £21 by Lord Sandwich, on going out as Ambassador to the Congress at Aix-la-Chapelle, and 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. by the same nobleman, on becoming Recorder of Huntingdon; 13s. 4d. by the Duke of Bedford, on getting the Garter, and 16s. 8d. (Scotch) by the Duke of Buccleuch, on

getting the Thistle ; £21 by the Earl of Holderness, as Secretary of State ; and £9 19s. 6d. by Charles James Fox, as a Lord of the Admiralty.

The general toasts originally proposed and adopted by the Society were "*Viva la Virtù*," "Grecian Taste and Roman Spirit," and "Absent Members." To these was added, by a minute of March 7, 174 $\frac{1}{2}$, "*Esto præclara, esto perpetua*." On March 29, 1789, it was resolved to add the toast of "The King," which was to precede all others. This addition was no doubt due to the outburst of loyalty which took place when the King resumed his authority, after his recovery from his first attack of insanity, on March 10 of the same year.

Walpole was very severe upon the Dilettanti. "The nominal qualification for membership," said he, "is having been in Italy, and the real one, being drunk ; the two chiefs are Lord Middlesex and Sir Francis Dashwood, who were seldom sober the whole time they were in Italy." Were the owner of Strawberry Hill to attend a meeting of the Society at the present time, he would be surprised to observe the sobriety which now prevails.

In the distant past, some of the more juvenile members occasionally did behave in a riotous manner. On January 30, 1734, for instance, a party of young men, seven of whom (Harcourt, Middlesex, Boyne, Shirley, Strode, Denny, and Sir James Gray) were members of the Dilettanti, met to celebrate the birthday of one of the company present, by a dinner at the White Eagle Tavern in Suffolk Street. The disorder caused by their drunken revels attracted a crowd of people, who were led to believe

that the dinner was held to commemorate the execution of Charles I. on that day, and that a calf's head had been served at table by way of ridicule. A bonfire was lit, and on the diners appearing at the windows they were stoned by the mob, in spite of their protestations of fidelity to the Government and the King. It ended in a riot, stirred up by a Catholic priest, which the newspapers converted into an event of historical importance.

The Dilettanti Society has never lost sight of the main objects for which it was founded, and in 1855 a project was started for reproducing by some process of engraving the whole of the Society's collection of portraits. Sir Richard Westmacott, R.A., communicated with Mr. George Scharf, jun. (afterwards Director of the National Portrait Gallery), and received from him an estimate of the cost of engraving on wood the thirty-one portraits in question. The cost, however, was probably the reason which deterred the Society from proceeding in the matter.

The Society once met at the Star and Garter Tavern in Pall Mall, but in 1800 transferred its meetings to a great room in the Thatched House Tavern in St. James's Street.

The ceiling here was painted to represent the sky, and was crossed by gold cords interlacing one another, from the knots of which hung three large glass chandeliers.

The room formed an admirable setting for the Society's pictures, the most remarkable of which are, of course, the three painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

The first of these is a group in the manner of

Paul Veronese, containing the portraits of the Duke of Leeds, Lord Dundas, Constantine Lord Mulgrave, Lord Seaforth, the Hon. Charles Greville, Charles Crowle, Esq., and Sir Joseph Banks. Another group in the same style contains portraits of Sir William Hamilton, Sir Watkin W. Wynne, Richard Thomson, Esq., Sir John Taylor, Payne Gallwey, Esq., John Smythe, Esq., and Spencer S. Stanhope, Esq. The portrait of Sir Joshua shows him in a loose robe, wearing his own hair.

It should be added that earlier portraits in the possession of the Society are by Hudson, Reynolds's master.

Some are in eighteenth-century costume, others in Turkish or Roman dress. There is a convivial spirit in these pictures. Lord Sandwich, for instance, in a Turkish costume, is shown casting an affectionate glance upon a brimming goblet in his left hand, while his right holds a flask of great capacity. Sir Bouchier Wrey is seated in the cabin of a ship mixing punch and eagerly embracing the bowl, of which a lurch of the sea would seem about to deprive him; the inscription is, *Dulce est desipere in loco*. The Dilettanti possess a curious old portrait of the Earl of Holderness in a red cap, as a gondolier, with the Rialto and Venice in the background; there is Charles Sackville, Duke of Dorset, as a Roman senator, dated 1738; Lord Galloway in the dress of a Cardinal. A curious likeness of one of the earliest of the Dilettanti—Lord le Despencer—portrays him as a monk at his devotions, clasping a brimming goblet for his rosary, and with eyes not very piously fixed on a statue of the Venus de'

Medici. Some of these pictures, indeed, recall the Medmenham orgies, with which some of the Dilettanti were not unfamiliar.

In 1884 the two groups by Sir Joshua Reynolds and the portrait of himself were lent by the Society to the Grosvenor Gallery for an exhibition of the collected works of the great master. In March, 1890, on the Society's removing from Willis's Rooms, the two fine groups by Sir Joshua were once more deposited on loan with the Trustees of the National Gallery, until the whole collection of pictures was removed and rehung in the Society's new room in the Grafton Gallery.

During recent years the Society has from time to time added to its pictures.

In January 1894, a portrait of Mr. William Watkiss Lloyd, painted by Miss Bush, was received by the Society from his daughter, Miss Ellen Watkiss Lloyd, having been bequeathed to the Society by her late father, who had for many years been one of its most active and respected members. After the death of Lord Leighton, President of the Royal Academy, in January 1896, the Dilettanti, being anxious to obtain a portrait of one of the most illustrious of their body, decided to have a copy made of the portrait painted by Lord Leighton of himself for the Uffizi Gallery at Florence. The work was entrusted to Mr. Charles Holroyd (now Keeper of the National Gallery of British Art), and completed before the close of the same year. In February 1896, on the resignation by Mr. (now Sir) Sidney Colvin of his post as secretary and treasurer of the Society, the Society ordered that a portrait of that

gentleman should be added to their collection. Sir Edward Poynter undertook to paint the portrait of Mr. Colvin, which was, by permission of the Society, sent to the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1897. Another modern portrait of interest is Sir Edward Ryan, by Lord Leighton.

The Dilettanti, the membership of which at the present day is largely composed of high legal and Government officials, generally have six dinners a year, and sometimes more, at the Grafton Galleries. The ancient ceremonies, including the appointment of a functionary known as the Imp, are retained. The father of the club at the present day is Mr. W. C. Cartwright, who was originally introduced by the late Lord Houghton.

The Thatched House Tavern, in the large room of which the members of the Dilettanti Society were once wont to assemble, was for a time also the meeting-place of another somewhat similar society, the Literary Club. This is now represented by The Club, which is perhaps the most exclusive institution in Europe. So little known is the existence of this society that at the foundation of the Turf Club it was at first proposed to call it The Club; and, indeed, it was some time before the discovery that the name had been long before appropriated placed the adoption of such an appellation out of the question. The membership of The Club is limited in the extreme, which may be realized when it is stated that since its foundation, in 1764, not 300 members have secured election. Forty, according to the regulations, is the extreme limit of membership. Amongst

distinguished men who have been members appear the names of Dr. Johnson, Boswell, Garrick, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Oliver Goldsmith, Burke, Fox, and Gibbon. In more modern times many prominent personalities have been members—amongst them Mr. Gladstone, Lord Leighton, Professor Huxley, Lord Salisbury, Lord Rosebery, Lord Goschen, the Duke of Argyll, Lord Herschell, Lord Dufferin, Lord Wolseley, Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, Mr. Arthur Balfour, Lord Peel, Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Poynter, and many others whose names are well known in legal, political, artistic, and literary circles.

The club was founded in 1764 by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Dr. Samuel Johnson, and for some years met on Monday evenings at seven. In 1772 the day of meeting was changed to Friday, and about that time, instead of supping, they agreed to dine together once in every fortnight during the sitting of Parliament. In 1773 The Club, which soon after its foundation consisted of twelve members, was enlarged to twenty; March 11, 1777, to twenty-six; November 27, 1778, to thirty; May 9, 1780, to thirty-five; and it was then resolved that it should never exceed forty. It met originally at the Turk's Head, in Gerrard Street, and continued to meet there till 1783, when their landlord died, and the house was soon afterwards shut up. They then removed to Prince's, in Saville Street; and on his house being, soon afterwards, shut up, they removed to Baxter's, which afterwards became Thomas's, in Dover Street. In January 1792, they removed to Parsloe's, in

St. James's Street; and on February 26, 1799, to the Thatched House, in the same street.

The club received the name of Literary Club at Garrick's funeral.

In the early days of The Club, Dr. Johnson was exceedingly particular as to the admission of candidates, and would not hear of any increase in the number of members. Not long after its institution, Sir Joshua Reynolds was speaking of the club to Garrick. "I like it much," said the great actor briskly; "I think I shall be of you." When Sir Joshua mentioned this to Dr. Johnson, the latter, according to Boswell, was much displeased with the actor's conceit. "He'll be of us!" growled he; "how does he know we will permit him?"

Sir John Hawkins tried to soften Johnson, and spoke to him of Garrick in a very eulogistic way. "Sir," replied Johnson, "he will disturb us by his buffoonery." In the same spirit he declared to Mr. Thrale that, if Garrick should apply for admission, he would blackball him. "Who, sir?" exclaimed Thrale, with surprise: "Mr. Garrick—your friend, your companion—blackball him?" "Why, sir," replied Johnson, "I love my little David dearly—better than all or any of his flatterers do; but surely one ought to sit, in a society like ours,

‘Unelbowed by a gamester, pimp, or player.’”

By degrees the rigour of the club relaxed; some of the members grew negligent. Beauclerk lost his right of membership by neglecting to attend.

Nevertheless, on his marriage (with Lady Diana Spencer, daughter of the Duke of Marlborough, and recently divorced from Viscount Bolingbroke), he claimed and regained his seat in the club. The number of the members was likewise augmented. The proposition to increase it originated with Goldsmith. "It would give," he thought, "an agreeable variety to their meetings; for there can be nothing new amongst us," said he: "we have travelled over each other's minds." Johnson was piqued at the suggestion. "Sir," said he, "you have not travelled over my mind, I promise you." Sir Joshua, less confident in the exhaustless fecundity of his mind, felt and acknowledged the force of Goldsmith's suggestion. Several new members therefore were elected; the first, to his great joy, was David Garrick. Goldsmith, who was now on cordial terms with the great actor, zealously promoted his election, and Johnson gave it his warm approbation.

The meetings of the Literary Club were often the occasion of much discussion between Edmund Burke and Johnson. One evening the former observed that a hogshead of claret, which had been sent as a present to the club, was almost out, and proposed that Johnson should write for another in such ambiguity of expression as might have a chance of procuring it also as a gift. One of the company said: "Dr. Johnson shall be our dictator." "Were I," said Johnson, "your dictator, you should have no wine; it would be my business '*cavere ne quid detrimenti respublica caperet.*' Wine is dangerous; Rome was ruined by luxury." Burke replied: "If

you allow no wine as dictator, you shall not have me for master of the horse."

Dr. Johnson for a time completely dominated the club, and once, in his usual grandiloquent manner, said to Boswell: "Sir, you got into the club by doing what a man can do. Several of the members wished to keep you out; Burke told me he doubted if you were fit for it. Now you are in, none of them are sorry." *Boswell*: "They were afraid of you, sir, as it was you proposed me." *Johnson*: "Sir, they knew that if they refused you they would probably have never got into another club—I would have kept them all out."

At last, owing to his ill-temper and rudeness, the great lexicographer's influence in the club sensibly decreased.

The club possesses a very valuable collection of autographs of former distinguished members, and amongst its memorials is a portrait of Sir Joshua Reynolds, with spectacles on, similar to the picture in the Royal Collection; this portrait was painted and presented by Sir Joshua, as the founder of the club.

Another club which was once the resort of many clever and distinguished men was the Cosmopolitan, in Charles Street, Berkeley Square. This ceased to exist not very many years ago. The house in which it held its meetings had been pulled down, and though the Cosmopolitan migrated to the Alpine Club, it did not long survive the change. Its meetings were held twice a week, in the evening, no meals whatever being served, though light refreshments were supplied. The house in Charles Street had previously contained the studio of Watts

the painter, and a great feature of the club-room was a very large picture representing a scene from the "Decameron," which had been painted by that artist. This is now in the Tate Gallery. When the Cosmopolitan was dissolved, a certain sum of money remained, and this, on the suggestion of a former leading member, is gradually being spent in dinners at which former members from time to time foregather.

A dining club which for a time attracted considerable attention was the Roxburghe, which originated under the following circumstances : The Duke of Roxburghe was a noted bibliophile ; the sale of his library, which excited great interest in 1812, lasted for forty-two days, and on the evening when the sale had been concluded the club was formed by about sixteen bibliomaniacs, after a dinner at the St. Albans Tavern, Lord Spencer being in the chair. The Roxburghe consisted mostly of men devoted to rare books. Tomes containing alterations in the title-page, or in a leaf, or in any trivial circumstance, were bought by these collectors at £100, £200, or £300, though the copies were often of small intrinsic worth. Specimens of first editions of all authors, and editions by the early printers, were never sold for less than £50, £100, or £200. So great became this mania that, in order to gratify the members of the club, facsimile copies of clumsy editions of trumpery books were reprinted. In some cases, indeed, it became worth the while of unscrupulous people to palm off forgeries upon the more credulous of these collectors.

The club issued various publications, but its

costly dinners attracted more attention than anything else. On one occasion the bill was above £5 10s. per head, and the list of toasts included the “immortal memory” not only of John, Duke of Roxburghe, but of William Caxton, Dame Juliana Berners, Wynkyn de Worde, Richard Pynson, the Aldine family, and “The Cause of Bibliomania all over the World.” In one year, when Lord Spencer presided over the club feast, the “Roxburghe Revels” thus recorded the fact: “Twenty-one members met joyfully, dined comfortably, challenged eagerly, tiddled prettily, divided regretfully, and paid the bill most cheerfully.”

The bill of one of the dinners of the Roxburghe Club held at Grillion’s Hotel has been preserved. Its curious phraseology is due to the French waiter who made it out:

DINNER (*sic*) DU 17 JUIN, 1815.

	£	s.	d.
20 - - - - -	20	0	0
Desser - - - - -	2	0	0
Deu sorte de Glasse - - - - -	1	4	0
Glasse pour 6 - - - - -	0	4	0
5 Boutelle de Champagne - - - - -	4	0	0
7 Boutelle de harmetage - - - - -	5	5	0
1 Boutelle de Hok - - - - -	0	15	0
4 Boutelle de Port - - - - -	1	6	0
4 Boutelle de Maderre - - - - -	2	0	0
22 Boutelle de Bordeaux - - - - -	15	8	0
2 Boutelle de Bourgogne - - - - -	1	12	0
[Not legible] - - - - -	0	14	0
Soder - - - - -	0	2	0
Biere e Ail - - - - -	0	6	0
Por la Lettre - - - - -	0	2	0
Pour faire une prune - - - - -	0	6	0
Pour un fiacre - - - - -	0	2	0
	55	6	0
Waiters - - - - -	1	14	0
	£57	0	0

Amongst the curious old clubs of the eighteenth century, the Kit-Kat, founded about 1700, deserves attention. This was composed of thirty-nine noblemen and gentlemen zealously attached to the House of Hanover, among them six Dukes and many other peers. The club met at a small house in Shire Lane, by Temple Bar, where a famous mutton-pie man, by name Christopher Katt, supplied his pies to the club suppers and gave his name to the club, although it has been stated that the pie itself was called "kit-kat."

The extraordinary title of the club is explained in the following lines :

" Whence deathless Kit-Kat took its name,
Few critics can unriddle ;
Some say from pastrycook it came,
And some from Cat and Fiddle.

" From no trim beaux its name it boasts,
Grey statesmen or green wits,
But from the pell-mell peck of toasts
Of old cats and young kits."

A feature of the club was its toasts. Every member was compelled to name a beauty, whose claims to the honour were then discussed ; and if her name was approved, a special tumbler was consecrated to her, and verses to her honour engraved on it. Such of these tumblers as still survive must be very rare. When only eight years old, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu enjoyed the honour of having her charms commemorated on one of these "toasting tumblers." Her father, afterwards Duke of Kingston, in a fit of caprice proposed "The Pretty Little Child" as his toast. The other members,

who had never seen her, objected, but, the child having been sent for, found her charming, and yielded. The forward little girl was handed from knee to knee, petted and caressed by the assembled wits. Another celebrated toast of the Kit-Kat, mentioned by Walpole, was Lady Molyneux, who, he says, died smoking a pipe.

Several of the more celebrated of these "toasts" had their portraits hung in the club-room.

The character of the club was political as well as literary, but its chief aim was the promotion of culture and wit. The members subscribed the sum of 400 guineas to offer as prizes for the best comedies written.

This club at one period of its existence had a room built for the members at Barn Elms (now the highly prosperous Ranelagh Club). This was hung with portraits painted by Kneller, which, being all of one size, originated the name "Kit-Kat," which is still in use.

A prominent member of the Kit-Kat Club was the famous Court physician, Dr. Samuel Garth, who, while dining one evening, protested that he must leave early, as he had many patients to visit. Nevertheless he lingered on hour after hour. Sir Richard Steele, who was present, reminded him of his professional duties, when Garth produced a list of fifteen patients. "It matters little," he cried, "whether I see them or not to-night. Nine or ten are so bad that all the doctors in the world could not save them, and the remainder have such tough constitutions that they want no doctors."

A celebrated early eighteenth-century literary

club was the Royal Society, instituted by a number of literary men who met in Dean's Court, there to dine on fish and drink porter. One of these gatherings expanded into the Club of Royal Philosophers, or, as it came to be called, the Royal Society Club. They dined together on Thursdays, usually to the number of six, but sometimes more. A favourite dining-place was Pontack's, the celebrated French eating-house in Abchurch Lane, City; and they also dined at the Devil Tavern, near Temple Bar, and at the Mitre Tavern, in Fleet Street. In 1780 the club, as it had become, went to the Crown and Anchor Tavern, in the Strand; and here they remained for sixty-eight years, only removing to the Freemasons' Tavern, in Fleet Street, in 1848. Finally, when the Royal Society was installed at Burlington House in 1857, the club held its meetings at the Thatched House, in St. James's Street, which they frequented until that tavern was demolished.

As time went on, the cost of the club dinner gradually rose. It began at 1s. 6d. per head, then went to 4s., including wine and 2d. to the waiter, and was afterwards increased to 10s. The wine was laid in at £45 the pipe, or 1s. 6d. per bottle, and charged by the landlord at 2s. 6d. This club was sometimes known as Dr. Halley's, for Halley was said to have been its founder.

An eccentric member was the Hon. Henry Cavendish, commonly called the "Club Cræsus." Though wealthy, he seldom had enough money in his pockets to pay for his dinner, and his manners were extraordinary. He picked his teeth with a

fork, carried his cane stuck in his right boot, and was very angry when anyone else hung his hat on the peg he preferred in the hall. Yet he was not unsociable ; he is said to have left a large legacy to a fellow - member — Lord Bessborough — in gratitude for his pleasant conversation.

Cavendish was rather a misogynist. One evening a pretty girl chanced to be at an upper window on the opposite side of the street, watching the philosophers at dinner. She attracted notice, and one by one they got up and mustered round the window to admire the fair one. Cavendish, who thought they were looking at the moon, bustled up to them in his odd way, and, when he saw the real object of their study, turned away with intense disgust, and grunted out “ Pshaw ! ”

The President of the Royal Society was always elected president of the club. Princes, Ministers, men of high rank, and Ambassadors were entertained together with men of science, great ecclesiastics, and distinguished soldiers and sailors ; Franklin, Jenner, John Hunter, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir Thomas Lawrence, Gibbon, Wedgwood, Turner, De la Beche, and Brunel were amongst these.

The modern Royal Societies Club, in St. James's Street, has no connection with the ancient institution just mentioned. It was founded in 1894, and its members either belong to learned societies, Universities, and institutions of the United Kingdom, or are well known in the spheres of Literature, Science, and Art. The committee possesses the right of granting the use of certain rooms in the club-house for lectures or for meetings of any of

the societies or institutions recognized by the constitution of the club. This club has a somewhat peculiar subscription, town members—that is, those residing within a radius of twenty miles—paying eight guineas, country members six, and colonial and foreign members two.

A club which has done much to promote a knowledge and appreciation of art in London is the Burlington Fine Arts, now at 17 Savile Row. This was founded in 1866, when the Marquis d'Azeglio, then Sardinian Minister in London, and a well known connoisseur, was chairman. In the early days there were 250 members, and the club premises were at No. 177 Piccadilly. At that time the Fine Arts Club was still in existence, and most of its members joined what was called the Burlington Fine Arts Club, on account of its premises being opposite Burlington House, into which the Royal Academy had just moved. Exhibitions of considerable importance were held in the rooms in Piccadilly, the first chiefly of French etchings, and the last (in 1870) of original drawings by Raphael and Michael Angelo. In that year the club moved to Savile Row, where was built the present gallery, which has been the scene of a series of annual exhibitions.

The membership of this flourishing association of art-lovers is now 500, and since the foundation of the club its annual exhibitions have gathered together many priceless works of art in the club-house. This, however, contains no furniture or *objets d'art* calling for mention, with the exception of an Italian sixteenth-century mirror boldly carved

out of walnut wood in the style of Michael Angelo. The present chairman is Lord Brownlow, whilst the secretarial duties are most ably performed by Mr. Beavan.

The foremost modern literary club in England is of course the Athenæum, which was first established in 1824, under the name of The Society. The latter appellation was, however, changed to the Athenæum at an inaugural dinner given at No. 12 Waterloo Place.

Three years later the committee, having obtained possession of a more convenient site, part of which had been occupied by the recently demolished Carlton House, entrusted Decimus Burton with the task of building a suitable club-house. In the course of its construction Croker insisted that the Scotch sculptor, John Heming, should contribute a frieze designed as a reproduction of that of the Parthenon—an ornamentation at the time characterized as an extravagant novelty. In spite of a good deal of opposition, Croker carried the day, and the construction of an ice-house, which had been advocated by several members, was abandoned in order to afford funds for the classical decoration.

In connection with this was written the epigram :

“ I’m John Wilson Croker,
I do as I please :
They ask for an Ice-house,
I’ll give ’em—a Frieze.”

The new Athenæum club-house was formerly opened in February 1830, some soirées being given, to which ladies were admitted, though not without protest. The building, which is of some archi-

tectural interest, was erected on the west end of the courtyard of old Carlton House, the smoking-room being exactly under what was the Prince Regent's dining-room.

In the finely-proportioned hall eight pale primrose pillars on broad bronzed bases, copied from the Temple of the Winds at Athens, support the panelled waggon roof, the Pompeian ornamentation being of an original design. The two statues in niches, "Venus Victrix" and "Diana Robing," were chosen by Sir Thomas Lawrence, who also designed the club seal.

On the right of the hall is the morning-room, redecorated in 1892, when the ceiling was elaborately painted by Sir Edward Poynter. The bust of Milton in this room was bequeathed by Anthony Trollope; in the adjoining writing-room hangs a portrait of Dr. Johnson by Opie, the gift of Mr. Humphry Ward. The drawing-room upstairs, one of the finest rooms in London, has no fewer than eleven windows. But the chief glory of the Athenæum is its library, the view from which embraces the pretty garden, where a rookery once existed. The annual expenditure on books since 1848 has averaged about £450. The Athenæum library is by far the finest and most important club library in the world, all departments of foreign as well as English books being represented by rare and complete examples. Moreover, there is on its shelves one of the best collections of reference books in England, and the bookcases are stored with valuable volumes—rare tomes dealing with history, topography, and archæology, as well as

sumptuously - bound books on art. Of these a number were obtained under a legacy of the Rev. Charles Turner, and others were left by the late Mr. Felix Slade. The collection of English pamphlets is also singularly complete, and includes 21 volumes collected together by Sir James Macintosh, 43 by Dr. Nasmyth the antiquary, 139 volumes by Morton Pitt, 23 volumes by Gibbon on historical and financial subjects, 23 volumes devoted to foreign and colonial affairs, and 52 volumes of smaller publications relating to America. Amongst literary matter of a lighter description preserved in this library are 26 portfolios containing newspapers and caricatures collected during the siege of Paris and the Commune. In a case is preserved a large number of proof engravings, most of them after portraits of members. These were executed by George Richmond, R.A., who presented the collection. An interesting relic of Thackeray is the original manuscript of "The Orphan of Pimlico," in the great novelist's beautiful handwriting.

A portrait of George IV was formerly over the fireplace. Sir Thomas Lawrence, its painter, was engaged in finishing the sword-knot and orders only a few hours before his death. He intended to present it to the club, but, as his executors declined to part with it, the painting was eventually purchased for £128 10s. This portrait is now in the museum of the Royal Pavilion at Brighton, having been handed over to the Corporation of that town in 1858. Busts of Dr. Johnson (presented by Mr. Percy Fitzgerald) and of Pope (a bequest) are

here, together with the carved armchair used by Dickens at Gad's Hill, in which, on the day of his death, the great novelist had been sitting at work on "Edwin Drood." Many will remember "The Empty Chair" which appeared in the then newly-founded *Graphic* in June 1870. Macaulay's corner, near the books on English history, is a well-known feature of this library, which the late Mark Pattison said he thought the most delightful place in the world, especially on a Sunday morning. At the table in the south-west corner Thackeray used constantly to work. A great habitu   of the library in the early days of the club was Isaac Disraeli, who, as befitted the author of the "Curiosities of Literature," was one of the earliest members—indeed, one of the founders of the club. His invariable costume consisted of a blue coat with brass buttons, a yellow waistcoat, and knee-breeches. A similar fashion was followed by another member—Dr. Booth—as late as 1863.

One evening, in or about the year 1830, a non-member, young Benjamin Disraeli, in defiance of the club rules, coolly walked upstairs to the library, and there proceeded to confer with his father. He was duly requested to withdraw, and it is perhaps not extraordinary that the future Prime Minister should have been blackballed in 1832. The reason given at the time for this rejection was that his proposer or seconder had rendered himself particularly unpopular.

It was not until thirty-four years later that the great statesman became a member of the Athen  um, to which he was admitted under the rule

allowing the committee to elect annually a limited number of persons "who have attained to distinguished eminence." As Lord Beaconsfield he seems to have used the club but little, although, according to tradition, he abstracted from the library his own "Revolutionary Epick," written in 1834.

In a corner of the Athenæum library the late Cardinal Manning, who had been elected at a time when he was attending the Vatican Council, used to sit quietly reading. At one time he used the club a good deal, as did another venerable ecclesiastic, Dr. Tatham, noted for eccentricity and long sermons. Yet another divine well known at the Athenæum was the nonagenarian Bishop Durnford, of Chichester. Bishops have always been more or less abundant at this club, for which reason, when an unusually large number were collected together for Convocation, Abraham Hayward is said to have grumbled out: "I see the Bishops are beginning to swarm: the atmosphere is alive with them; every moment I expect to find one dropping into my soup."

There was a great storm amongst the Bishops when Bishop Colenso visited England, and, as can be imagined, his admission to the Athenæum as an honorary member was violently opposed.

Samuel Wilberforce, Lord Lytton the novelist, Abraham Hayward (the Vernon Tuft of Samuel Warren's "Ten Thousand a Year," still remembered by some), and many other celebrated characters, were frequenters of this peaceful room. Here, too, Theodore Hook dashed off much brilliant

work. This spontaneous and volatile wit at one time used the club a great deal. He it was who wrote the lines :

“There’s first the Athenæum Club, so wise, there’s not a
man of it

That has not sense enough for six (in fact, that is the plan
of it);

The very waiters answer you with eloquence Socratical,
And always place the knives and forks in order mathe-
matical.”

Hook dined much at the Athenæum—often, it was said, “not wisely, but too well.” The name of his favourite spot in the dining-room—“Temperance Corner”—is still preserved. Here he used to call for toast-and-water and lemonade, which the waiters quite understood was his humorous way of indicating the various alcoholic beverages of which he was so fond. Hook loved to sit long over his meals, in which respect it is interesting to remember he was quite unlike Dickens, who often lunched standing, off sandwiches.

It was at the foot of the Athenæum staircase that the author of “Pickwick” ended his unfortunate estrangement from Thackeray, being intercepted by the latter and forced to shake hands.

Intellect rather than love of comfort formerly distinguished most members of the club, and for this reason, perhaps, the Athenæum has never been noted for its cooking. “Asiatic Sundays” was the name given to the Sabbaths, on which curry and rice always appeared on the bill of fare. Another Athenæum dinner was known for its marrow-bones and jam roly-poly puddings. Sir Edwin Landseer

once denounced an Athenæum beefsteak in a terse manner: "They say there's nothing like leather; this beefsteak is." A boar's head on the sideboard was described by a witty member as the head of a certain member who had at last met with the thoroughly deserved fate of decapitation.

Kinglake, the historian, lived almost entirely at the Athenæum, even when aged, infirm, and terribly deaf. People used to say that, when they talked to him, everybody in the room heard except Kinglake. Like many deaf men, he was given to shouting in people's ears, and on one occasion was heard screaming to Thackeray at the top of his voice: "Come and sit down; I have something very private to tell you: no one must hear it but you." Another distinguished soldier, equally deaf, used to select the smoking-room of his club for confidential conversations with members of his staff, putting momentous questions and receiving answers which were given in such a loud tone that everyone heard his official secrets.

The Athenæum has never been very favourable to the stage. Some of the great actors of the past, however, belonged to it, notably Sir Henry Irving, who was a most popular member.

Other actor members were Charles Mathews the elder, Macready, Charles Mayne Young, Charles Kemble, Charles Kean, and Daniel Terry.

Considering the partiality of literary men for tobacco, it seems curious that the only smoking-room in this club used to be in the basement. To supply a pressing need, an upper floor was a short time ago constructed at the top of the building;

and smokers can now be conveyed by a lift, put in at the time of the alterations in 1900.

Membership of the Athenæum would seem to favour a man's chances of living to a green old age, and certain members have belonged to the club for an extraordinary number of years. Mr. Lettsom Elliot, for instance, who died in 1898, had been a member since 1824, when he was elected at the first committee meeting of the club. Mr. Elliot had kept a copy of the first list of members, and in 1882 he had a reprint of this produced, which forms a record of considerable interest. On this committee were Chantrey, the sculptor; John Wilson Croker; Sir Humphry Davy; Sir Thomas Lawrence; Sir James Mackintosh; Tom Moore, the poet; Sir Walter Scott; together with some others. Amongst distinguished ordinary members have been Benjamin Brodie; Mark Isambard Brunel, the engineer; Dibdin; Isaac Disraeli; Lord Ellenborough; Michael Faraday; John Franklin; Henry Hallam; James Morier, the diplomatist, and author of "Haji Baba"; Samuel Rogers; Sir John Soane, who bequeathed to the nation the Soane Museum in Lincoln's Inn Fields; Joseph Turner; Charles Kemble; Charles Mathews the elder; Westall, the artist; David Wilkie; Henry Holland; Blanco White, a friend of Coleridge's; Whately; Newman; Jekyll, the wit; John Stuart Mill; and Herbert Spencer.

The last-named was fond of playing billiards in the club, where he is said to have made the famous remark to a very skilful antagonist: "Though a certain proficiency at this game is to be desired,

the skill you have shown seems to argue a misspent youth."

A club which somewhat resembled the present Athenæum in character was the Alfred, founded in 1808 for men of letters, travellers, and the like. It was first started at a house in Albemarle Street, when it appears to have been a very solemn institution. A member, indeed, not in sympathy with its tone, called it the "dullest place in the world, where bores prevailed to the exclusion of every other interest, and one heard nothing but idle reports and twaddling opinions. It is," said he, "the asylum of doting Tories and drivelling quidnuncs."

Lord Byron, however, called it "a pleasant club—a little too sober and literary, perhaps, but, on the whole, a decent resource on a rainy day."

In 1811, three years after its foundation, there were no fewer than 354 candidates for six vacancies, but this happy state of affairs did not last.

Sir William Fraser described the Alfred as having been "a sort of minor Athenæum," which perhaps caused a wag to say the title should be changed from Alfred to "Halfread."

Lord Alvanley, who was a member, once said at White's: "I stood the Alfred as long as I could, but when the seventeenth Bishop was proposed I gave in; I really could not enter the place without being put in mind of my Catechism." The Bishops, it is said, resigned the club when a billiard-table was introduced. In the course of time the Alfred languished, and was finally dissolved in 1855.

Hatred of tobacco, it is said, caused the end

of the Alfred. A certain influential section of members persistently opposing any improvement in the smoking-room, which was at the top of the house and stigmatized as an "infamous hole," the committee would make no concession, and so the club was eventually closed.

When it was evident that the Alfred could not maintain an independent existence (though perfectly solvent), a sort of coalition was formed with the Oriental. A large number of members were admitted to the latter without entrance fee, but most of the Alfred members joined other clubs, especially the Athenæum.

A flourishing little literary club of modern origin is the Savile, in Piccadilly. This possesses a very curious table, which was purchased some years ago. It would appear to have been made during the mid-Victorian period, and is embellished with a number of curious designs in various woods—masterpieces of the inlayer's art. Amongst these is a portrait of the late Queen Victoria.

CHAPTER XI

THE GARRICK—JOCKEY CLUB AT NEWMARKET—

ROYAL YACHT SQUADRON AT COWES—

CONCLUSION

THOUGH various London clubs possess a certain number of pictures and *objets d'art*, the Garrick stands alone in the ownership of a unique collection. This, however, has been described so frequently that any detailed treatment would be superfluous.

The Garrick was originally started at 35 King Street, Covent Garden, in 1831, "for the purpose of bringing together the 'patrons' of the drama and its professors, and also for offering literary men a rendezvous."

The club-house had been a family hotel. It was comfortable enough when it was first transformed into the home of the Garrick Club, but in course of time the building was found insufficient for the increased number of members, and in 1864 the club removed to a new house built for them a little farther west than the old one, in the then newly-made Garrick Street—a classic region associated with the old club-house.

The new Garrick was built by Mr. Marrable, who cleverly surmounted certain difficulties connected with the back of the building.

The bulk of the Garrick Club collection consists

of the gallery formed by the elder Mathews, who had a passion for collecting theatrical portraits, and who purchased most of the pictures owned by Mr. Harris, the old lessee of Covent Garden.

Mrs. Mathews, the actor's wife and biographer, describes how the pictures were saved from the swindling tenant who robbed them of their rent in the King's Road cottage. Mathews's "giant hobby," as she calls it, was then (1814) in its infancy; but the Mr. Tonson who succeeded them in the cottage begged to be allowed to retain the pictures, which were at that time hanging in one small room. Mathews, who would as soon have left behind him an eye or a limb as these his treasures, managed to retain them. Later on he built at his house at Hampstead a special gallery for his pictures, which had then considerably increased in number. Many writers came there to see them, all of whom were not equally appreciative. When, however, Mathews found a real judge of art, he called it "receiving a dividend," and would launch out into all sorts of disquisitions as to his treasures, enlivened by anecdotes and imitations of the persons portrayed. Inquisitive people, who came to see the actor as a celebrity rather than to inspect his pictures, irritated and exasperated him by their behaviour and their mistakes, which were often absurd. Harlowe's fine picture of Mrs. Siddons as Lady Macbeth was taken for a portrait of Mrs. Mathews; Dewilde's exquisite portrait of Miss De Camp—Mrs. Charles Kemble—in male attire, in "The Gentle Shepherd," was praised as being Master Betty. One individual, who had

evidently never entered a London theatre, asked why there was no portrait of Milton. Eventually all the pictures were exhibited in Oxford Street, and there still exists a catalogue of this exhibition, to which a characteristic article of Charles Lamb's, which appeared in the *London Magazine*, is prefixed.

During Mathews's lifetime the collection was removed to the Garrick Club. It then practically passed into the possession of a member, Mr. John Durrant, who eventually gave the pictures to the club.

There are many good portraits of Mathews at the Garrick, of which the most remarkable is, perhaps, the one by Harlowe, who depicted him in four perfectly different and distinct characters—a tribute to the actor's versatility. The four characters are those of Fond Barney, the idiot news-vendor of York; another weak-minded simpleton catching a fly; Mr. Wiggins, an extraordinarily stout man, in a farce called "Mrs. Wiggins"; and Mathews himself in ordinary day dress. Another good portrait, by Clint, A.R.A., shows Liston and Mathews in "The Village Lawyer," the former as Sheepface, the latter as Scout. Liston impressed people on casual acquaintance with an idea of inveterate gravity; as Sheepface he fairly amazed Mathews, and in this part made him laugh so much that he was hardly able to go on.

Two of the finest pictures in the Garrick are those representing Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard in "Macbeth," and Garrick and Mrs. Cibber in "Venice Preserved." Zoffany, who excelled in theatrical portraiture, painted both of these.

Another portrait by him shows the great actor as Lord Chalkstone.

The fine picture of Macbeth is highly interesting on account of Garrick's costume. Though a stage reformer, he did not dare to discard old traditions of dress, and played the Highland thane in a long-skirted blue coat with crimson cuffs, and a full-bottomed wig of the Georgian period. Occasionally he acted Macbeth in the costume of a fashionable gentleman of the day—a suit of black silk, with silk stockings, and shoes, buckles at the knees and feet, a full-bottomed wig, and sword.

Benjamin West once asked Garrick why he adhered to this ridiculous usage, to which he replied that he was afraid of his audience, who would have thrown bottles at him if he had dared to change. John Philip Kemble, when stage-manager at Drury Lane, finally corrected the absurdities of stage costume, although Henderson appears to have preceded him in this respect. In Romney's picture of Henderson as Macbeth, which is in the club, the chieftain appears as a medieval warrior wearing body armour, with arms and legs bare. In 1772 Macklin played Macbeth at Covent Garden in the dress of a Highlander, but, being a clumsy old man, he is said to have looked more like a Scotch piper than a warrior. Kemble, oddly enough, first played Othello in the full uniform of a British General—as Macbeth he wore a hearse-like plume in his bonnet; whilst Mrs. Crough, the singer, who played the First Witch, wore powdered hair and the fashionable costume of her day.

Garrick excelled in the art of facial expression.

When he sat to Gainsborough, he paid, it is said, no fewer than sixteen visits to his studio, and on each occasion wrought a change in his features. At length the painter, declaring he could not paint a man with such a "Protean phiz," threw down his brush in despair. Garrick sat to Hogarth as Fielding, after the novelist's death, when the painter wished to paint a posthumous likeness of the great writer. Dressed in a suit of Fielding's clothes, the actor cleverly assumed his features, look, and attitude. Small wonder that Johnson, when he heard that Garrick's face was growing wrinkled, exclaimed: "And so it ought, for whose face has experienced so much wear and tear as his?"

At times this great actor would indulge in very unconventional behaviour. Acting in a tragedy in which a Mr. Thomas Hurst—who was a brandy-merchant—took a part, Garrick, conceiving Hurst too tame to support him, reproved him publicly on the stage. "Mr. Hurst," said he, "if you will put MORE *British spirit* into your *acting*, and LESS in your *brandy*, you may send me *two gallons* to-morrow morning." Whether the brandy-merchant was offended or not, history does not relate; but he took care to remember the order, which he sent the following day, writing at the bottom of the bill of parcels: "As per your order last night, on the stage of Drury Lane Theatre."

Garrick once set up a man in a snuff-shop, and actually recommended his snuff, known as "No. 37," from the stage, as a result of which the snuff-merchant realized an ample fortune.

Garrick, as is well known, was not devoid of

vanity, and was at times fond of praising himself. During one evening at the Sublime Society, he remarked that so many manuscript plays were sent him to read, that in order to avoid losing them and hurting the feelings of the poor devils the authors, he made a point of ticketing and labelling the play that was to be returned, that it might be forthcoming at a moment's notice. "A fig for your hypocrisy!" exclaimed Murphy across the table. "You know, Davy, you mislaid my tragedy two months ago, and I make no doubt you have lost it." "Yes," replied Garrick; "but you forget, you ungrateful dog, that I offered you more than its value, for you might have had two manuscript farces in its stead."

Amongst the many fascinating actresses of other days who smile from the Garrick walls, some mention must be made of Mrs. Oldfield—Pope's Narcissa. Mrs. Oldfield was supposed to be the daughter of a Captain Oldfield. Her early years were passed with an aunt, who kept the Mitre Tavern in St. James's Market. At this resort she attracted attention for her recitation of one of Beaumont and Fletcher's comedies, and Rich, the celebrated manager, gave her an engagement at Drury Lane. Starting at a small salary, she quickly rose to speaking parts, and soon became the leading lady on the stage of that day. She went to the theatre in a chair escorted by two footmen, and, seldom mixing with her fellow-actors, enjoyed a unique position in spite of a by no means severe morality. She had one son by Arthur Maynwaring, and afterwards lived under the protection

of General Churchill, a brother of the great Duke of Marlborough. It is said that Queen Caroline remarked to her one day: "I hear that you and the General are married." "Madam," replied the actress discreetly, "the General keeps his own secrets." Mrs. Oldfield's children married well; her granddaughter became the wife of Lord Walpole of Wolterton, and was the direct ancestress of the present writer. The American novelist Mr. Winston Churchill is, I believe, a descendant of the sprightly actress.

From time to time the original collection at the Garrick Club has been largely increased, and some of the additions are notable. One of the most admirable modern portraits in the club now hangs over the morning-room mantelpiece. It represents the late Sir Henry Irving in morning dress, and was painted and presented by Sir John Millais. Another good portrait of the veteran Phelps as Cardinal Wolsey, in scarlet robes, is the work of that talented artist and actor—Mr. Forbes-Robertson. Mr. Henry Neville, who died but recently, was painted as Count Almaviva, by Mr. W. John Walton; and Sir Squire and Lady Bancroft are represented in marble statuettes, done by the late Prince Victor of Hohenlohe. A picture of Sir John Hare in one of his most successful creations—Benjamin Goldfinch in "A Pair of Spectacles"—has recently been added.

In the Garrick are preserved some small silver candlesticks, formed of little figures representing harlequins and the like. These were presented by the writer's great-uncle, Edward Walpole, known

as Adonis Walpole on account of his good looks. The rest of the set is in the possession of Lady Dorothy Nevill.

There have been many "characters" amongst Garrick members in former days, of whom, perhaps, the most original was Tom Hill, who was an authority upon most things—grave or gay.

Born in 1760 at Queenhithe, he became a dry-salter, but, having sustained financial losses in 1810, retired about that year to rooms in the Adelphi, where he lived comfortably enough. A great collector of books, chiefly old poetry, and theatrical relics, he was very well known in literary and stage circles.

Hill is said to have been the original of Paul Pry, but this is doubtful. The great joke in connection with him was his age. James Smith once said that it was impossible to discover his age, for the parish register had been burnt in the Fire of London; but Hook capped this: "Pooh, pooh!"—Tom's habitual exclamation—"he's one of the Little Hills that are spoken of as skipping in the Psalms."

Till within three months of his death, Hill usually rose at five, took a walk to Billingsgate, and brought the materials for his breakfast home with him to the Adelphi. At dinner he would eat and drink like a subaltern of five-and-twenty, and one secret of his continued vitality was that a day of abstinence and repose uniformly followed a festivity. He then nursed himself most carefully on tea and dry toast, tasted neither meat nor wine, and went to bed by eight o'clock. But perhaps the grand

secret was the easy, imperturbable serenity of his temper, which, when he died in 1841 at the age of eighty-one, enabled him to look twenty years younger. It was probably due to this fact, also, that his cheerfulness remained unimpaired, in spite of the comparative poverty of his later years.

Hill's collection of old English poetry was dispersed in 1810, whilst other rarities and memorials which he had got together took Evans, of Pall Mall, a week to sell by auction. These included some very interesting autograph letters, and among the memorials were Garrick's Shakespeare cup, a vase carved from the Bard's mulberry-tree, and a block of wood from Pope's willow at Twickenham.

The late sittings for which the Garrick was formerly renowned seem to have become more or less things of the past.

Supper at the Garrick some twenty-five years ago was, especially on certain nights, a regular institution. The late Sir Henry Irving and Mr. Toole were regular attendants, often sitting very late at the long table in the smaller dining-room, where the supper-table was regularly laid. Many of those who assembled round the festive board have now, like the before-mentioned theatrical stars, joined the great majority.

At that time, except for lunch, the Garrick Club was not, during the day, used by so many members as at present, nor was the club-house so comfortable or the pictures and relics displayed to such advantage. Those desirous of smoking were also hampered by restrictions, which have since been

removed. As a result of the enlightened policy pursued in recent years, this club is now one of the most sociable and agreeable in London, whilst its membership is still largely composed of men well known in the literary and theatrical worlds.

The Arts Club, now in Dover Street, was formerly located at 17 Hanover Square. "Sweet Seventeen," as it came to be called, was a fine old Georgian house, with marble mantelpieces and ceilings painted by Angelica Kauffmann. Some of the rooms were originally panelled, and the staircases were of old oak; but all these fine things are now dispersed, and the house has been pulled down. At the time when it was occupied by the Arts Club the walls were further adorned by pictures which were lent for exhibition, and which completed a *tout ensemble* of singular charm.

Another club of which much has been written is the Savage, started in 1855. This Bohemian institution has always had a number of celebrities on its list. In its early days the membership included George Cruikshank, J. L. Toole, Paul Bedford, Shirley Brooks, Dion Boucicault, and George Augustus Sala. Sala's name appears in the first list, and he served on the first committee, but although he twice joined the club he was not a "Savage" when he died. Other notable members of those days were "Mike" Halliday, Arthur Sketchley, Sir Squire Bancroft, Sothern, Henry S. Leigh, "Tom" Robertson, Lord Dunraven (then Lord Adair), Joseph Hatton, Kendal, George Henty the war-correspondent (who won great fame as a writer of boys' books), W. S. (now

Sir William) Gilbert, and Arthur Sullivan the composer.

In connection with Bohemian clubs, some mention of the Players' Club, at 16 Gramercy Park, New York, may not be out of place. The club in question was opened on the last night of 1888 by the late Mr. Edwin Booth, who, having purchased the building, remodelled and furnished it as a club-house, and presented the title-deed to the members as a free gift.

Membership of the Players', like that of the Garrick, is not confined to actors alone. It also resembles the latter club in that it contains many prints and mementoes of great theatrical stars who have passed away, including a priceless collection of costumes and properties. The memory of Edwin Booth is commemorated firstly by the conservation, in an untouched condition, of the bedroom in which the last years of his life were passed; and secondly by the Booth library, containing a fine collection of volumes bequeathed to the club by the great actor.

The contents of Edwin Booth's bedroom are kept exactly as in his lifetime, even to the last book he read, with a mark on the last page the great actor turned. A chair and skull used by him in "Hamlet" are also here.

On the last night of the old year, club custom at the Players' ordains that about midnight a loving-cup should be passed round amongst members, in order that they may drink to the memory of the founder.

"Ladies' day" is an annual festival of this club,

held on Shakespeare's birthday—April 23rd—on which date a number of ladies, either connected with or interested in the stage, are entertained. This and "founders' night" are the only two functions held, and consequently invitations are very highly prized. Each member is allowed but two cards of admission.

Another Bohemian New York club is the Lambs. The funds to pay off a mortgage of 36,000 dollars on the club-house in West Thirty-sixth Street were raised in a highly characteristic manner. For the space of one week a company consisting entirely of stars—actors, musicians, and authors—formed themselves into a minstrel troupe and toured through eight cities, with the result that they made 67,000 dollars. Each member of this troupe on its dispersal received one dollar as a souvenir of his services.

The present club-house of the Lambs, in West Forty-fourth Street, cost no less than 300,000 dollars. It is a most luxurious building furnished with every modern convenience, and contains a theatre where the Lambs hold their famous Gambols, and where plays never performed elsewhere are played. Besides their private Gambols, the Lambs give an annual public Gambol at a New York Theatre, to see which the public can obtain tickets through members.

The Lambs are exceedingly charitable to any of their number who may be overwhelmed by misfortune or sickness, and, indeed, membership of the club has been said to constitute an insurance against adversity. Many a stricken actor has had reason to

bless the club, which on one occasion, through a benefit performance organized in conjunction with the players, obtained a comfortable annuity for an actor who had been seized by an incurable malady.

Whilst hardly a club in the sense now usually understood, the Jockey Club possesses rooms at Newmarket, and a number of sporting prints are to be seen here. The most interesting relic in the possession of the club, however, is a hoof of Eclipse, formed into an inkstand. On the front are the royal arms in gold in high relief, and on the pedestal is the following inscription: "This piece of plate, with the hoof of Eclipse, was presented by His Most Gracious Majesty William the Fourth to the Jockey Club, May 1832." This hoof was originally given as a prize in a Challenge race (rather like "The Whip") run on Ascot Thursday. The King gave an additional £200, and there was a £100 sweepstake between members of the Jockey Club. It was run for soon after it was presented, in the year of the great Reform Bill, on the same afternoon that Camarine and Rowton ran a dead-heat for the Gold Cup, and over the same course. One subscriber scratched, and, of the other two, Lord Chesterfield, with the famous Priam (Conolly up), beat General Grosvenor and Sarpedon, ridden by John Day. In 1834 Lord Chesterfield won again with Glaucus (Bill Scott up), beating Gallopade, who had won for Mr. Cosby the year before. Twelve months later the hoof was challenged for by Mr. Batson, but there was no reply. It is much to be regretted that no sporting event is now connected with this historic hoof. Considering how

small an interest the contests for the Whip have excited of late years, there is little likelihood of this relic being again run for on Newmarket Heath.

Eclipse is closely connected with the history of the Jockey Club. This race-horse of historic memory lived for twenty-five years, and the years in question just coincided with the period during which the Jockey Club grew into a powerful body. It was also the time of the foundation of the Derby, the Oaks, and the St. Leger. Then it was that the Jockey Club first began to be quoted as a real and powerful authority, and when its rulings were first accepted by racing men. The sentence of "warning off," originally established by precedent, was legally recognized in 1827, when, in the case of the Duke of Portland *v.* Hawkins, a man to whom the Jockey Club objected was successfully proceeded against for trespass on the freehold property of the club.

Although the memory of Eclipse is intimately connected with the history of the Jockey Club, it is a rather remarkable thing that his owner never succeeded in obtaining admittance to that exclusive circle. Colonel O'Kelly's one great grievance, which led him persistently to denounce the Jockey Club, was the stubborn refusal of the members to elect him.

On one occasion, when Colonel O'Kelly was making a contract with a jockey, he stipulated as a special condition that he should never ride for any of the *black-legged* fraternity. The consenting jockey saying "he was at a loss to know who the

Captain meant by the black-legged fraternity," he instantly replied, with his usual energy: "Oh, —, my dear, and I'll soon make you understand who I mean by the black-legged fraternity! There's the Duke of Grafton, the Duke of Dorset," etc., naming the principal members of the Jockey Club, "and all the set of *thaves* that belong to the humbug societies and *bugaboo* clubs, where they can meet and rob one another without fear of detection."

Though old O'Kelly was never admitted, his nephew Andrew became a member soon after his uncle's death.

The Jockey Club appears to have been founded about 1752. The first public mention of the new association—which is to be found in Mr. John Pond's "Sporting Kalendar"—evidently assumes the familiarity of his readers with the club; for it makes the simple announcement for 1752 of "a contribution free plate by horses the property of noblemen and gentlemen belonging to the Jockey Club," and by the May meeting of 1753 two "Jockey Club Plates" were being regularly run for. The list of members as shown by these and similar races run for between this year and 1773, and the date when the "Racing Calendar" was first produced by James Weatherby, "Keeper of the Matchbook," indicate very clearly what were the objects of a club the origin and early history of which are wrapped in considerable obscurity.

Another very exclusive institution is the Royal Yacht Squadron at Cowes, which was originally founded by a number of noblemen and gentlemen (as the old-world phrasing ran) desirous to promote

the science of marine architecture and the naval power of the kingdom. Prize cups were frequently given to be sailed for, not only by their own vessels, but by those of other clubs; the pilot and fishing vessels of the Island were not forgotten; and liberality and national utility were the main objects of the club. The result of all this was that great improvement in the construction of ships was absolutely forced upon the Government of that day.

On June 1, 1815, a body of gentlemen met at the Thatched House Tavern in St. James's Street, under the presidency of Lord Grantham, and decided to form a club which should consist only of men who were interested in the sailing of yachts in salt water. These gentlemen nominated themselves with others to the number of forty-two to form a list which should constitute the original members of the club, decided upon a small subscription, and drew up a few simple rules to govern their newly-formed yacht club.

The original idea of the club would seem to have been merely an association of those yacht-owners who frequented Cowes during the summer, and it was to be maintained by a couple of annual meetings—one in the spring at the Thatched House, the other at a dinner at the hotel at East Cowes. There was at first no club-house, and the subscription was only two guineas. The qualification for any future candidate was the possession of a yacht of a certain tonnage, the payment of an entrance fee of three guineas, and the occupation of such a social position as should commend him to the

members of the club, who would consider the matter at a general meeting.

The original title was the Yacht Club, and the rules relating to yachting were few and simple. Every member, upon payment of his three guineas to the secretary and treasurer, was entitled to two copies of the signal-book, "and will be expected to provide himself with a set of flags according to the regulations contained therein." That same signal-book was the subject of a great deal of anxious consideration during the next few years. The club paid Mr. Finlaison £45 for printing the first copies, which they soon found to be based upon a wrong system, and appointed a committee to consider the matter, who called in "the well-known skill and experience of Sir Home Popham, K.C.B.," to assist them in devising a new set. A few years later these also were found wanting "as clumsy and inconvenient," by reason of the number of flags employed, when the Yacht Club adopted the code "composed by Mr. Brownrigg, midshipman of H.M.S. *Glasgow*, it being thought that two flags, two pennants, and an ensign are all that can be required."

Members were requested to register the name, rig, tonnage, and port of registry, of their vessels with the secretary, and the club adopted as a distinguishing ensign "a white flag with the Union in the corner, with a plain white burgee at the mast-head."

Lord Uxbridge, afterwards the first Marquis of Anglesey, of Waterloo fame, was one of the original founders of the club. He was very proud of the

whiteness of the decks of his famous cutter, the *Pearl*, and when he gave a passage to Lord Adolphus FitzClarence, who wore carefully varnished boots which left marks on the deck after a shower, he told off one of his hands to follow the offender with a swab and remove the mark of each footstep.

The first Commodore of the club was the Hon. Charles Pelham, so popular in later years as Lord Yarborough, and as the owner of the two famous yachts called the *Falcon*. Lord Yarborough's memory was so revered among his club-mates that when his son came up for election, nearly half a century later, all the formalities of the ballot were dispensed with, and he was elected with acclamation.

Another original member was Lord FitzHarris, and his official yacht, the *Medina*, of eighty tons, was always to be seen at the earlier functions of the club. "She was the connecting link," wrote his son, "between the ships painted by Van de Velde and those which preceded ironclads. She was built in William the Third's reign, and her sides were elaborately gilded. She was highest by the stern, with such a deep waist forward as to endanger her going down head foremost if she shipped a heavy sea. She had very little beam, and her complement consisted of Captain Love, R.N., the master, and twelve men."

Sir William Curtis, the founder of the present banking house of Robarts, Lubbock and Co., was another member. The Prince Regent often stayed with him upon his luxurious yacht, the *Emma Maria*. Sir William was an amiable and charitable man, of whom many amusing stories were

told. He went with George IV to Scotland in 1822, and appeared in complete Highland costume at Holyrood, even down to the knife stuck in his stocking. The King himself appeared in a kilt, and, it was said, was much chagrined to find Curtis the only man in the room similarly clad. The Baronet, on the other hand, was flattered to think that he alone shared the Highland costume with His Majesty, and asked King George if he did not think him well dressed. "Yes," replied that monarch, "only you have no spoon in your hose."

In 1821 the Yacht Club, for some obscure reason, changed the original white ensign and jack with a white burgee to a red ensign and burgee. In 1824 they added the letters R.Y.C. and a crown and foul anchor to the burgee; in 1826 they changed the ensign to a jack with a white border, without any explanation being recorded in the minutes.

In 1824 the club began to feel the want of a meeting-place at Cowes, and a year later the Gloucester Hotel became its first habitation. To meet the increased expenses resulting from the change, we may note that the annual subscription was raised in the year of removal successively to £5 and to £8, the entrance fee to £10, and the tonnage qualification for the boats of new members was raised from 20 to 30 tons.

After the vacation of Cowes Castle by Lord Anglesey, the Governor, the Squadron acquired the old building, and, after a good deal of money had been expended in alterations, the club took up its abode there in 1858. Then began a new era in its history, and, owing to the interest taken by the

then Prince of Wales, its importance as an exclusive social institution greatly increased.

One of the most pleasant rooms in the present well-appointed club-house is the library, over which the late Mr. Montagu Guest used to preside. The collection of books here dates from 1835, when members were first invited to increase the number of volumes owned by the club either by donations of money or gifts of books.

In the castle hang a number of pictures connected with the history of the club. These include portraits of Lord Yarborough, the Earl of Wilton, and other notabilities connected with the past history of the Squadron. As a club-house, the old castle is one of the pleasantest in the world. It is an ideal retreat for members tired of town, for whose use a number of excellent bedrooms are provided. The Royal Yacht Squadron is singularly fortunate in its secretary, a retired naval officer of much urbanity and tactful charm.

The Royal Yacht Club, as it was called in the early days of its existence, did much to improve naval architecture, and was without doubt of considerable national utility.

Lord Yarborough's *Falcon* was a very fine vessel, as was the Duke of Norfolk's 210-ton cutter *Arundel*, which was said to be one of the finest and fastest of its kind in the world. Lord Belfast quite put the naval authorities to shame with his brig, the *Water Witch*. Taking the given length of the worst and most despised class of vessels in King William IV's navy—that called the "ten-gun brig"—he declared that he would construct a brig that should not

only be superior for the purposes of war, but should actually be made to outsail any vessel in the royal navy—rather a bold declaration this, it must be acknowledged, more particularly as two vessels built upon an improved and scientific plan were to be opposed to him. To work, however, his lordship went, and the product of his labours was the celebrated *Water Witch*, built for him by Mr. Joseph White, of East Cowes, on the model of his former yachts, the *Harriet*, *Thérèse*, and *Louisa*, and precisely the length of the ten-gun brig, which, though incapable of either fighting or running, was, unfortunately, quite capable of going to the bottom.

Lord Yarborough enforced naval discipline on board the *Falcon*, the crew of which were paid extra wages on condition that they submitted to the usual rules in force on British vessels of war. These included flogging under certain circumstances, and it is said that, in consideration of the additional sum paid by Lord Yarborough, some of the crew cheerfully submitted to the occasional application of the cat-o'-nine-tails.

Indeed, before the *Falcon* left Plymouth Sound for a cruise, all hands cordially signed a paper setting forth the usefulness of a sound flogging in cases of extremity, and their perfect willingness to undergo the experiment whenever it was deemed necessary for the preservation of good order.

In the early days of the club only two instances of blackballing seem to have occurred. One was in the person of a noble Duke who had been scratched off the list on account of not paying his

annual subscription, who, when he sought re-election, was excluded as a matter of course. The other individual was the owner of a yacht like a river barge, with a flat bottom, and he was rejected more in joke than otherwise, it being reported that his yacht was two months on her voyage from the Thames to Cowes, and that, moreover, the bulkhead and chimney in the cabin were of *brick*!

The candidates of that day, as may be judged from their almost invariable success in the ballot, were generally of a highly acceptable description. The same, perhaps, can hardly be said of some in recent years, when, in accordance with the spirit of the age, certain individuals, whose only claim to social consideration lay in their wealth, have made attempts to force the Squadron portals.

One of these received what was perhaps the most severe rebuff ever sustained by a candidate, in the shape of no fewer than seventy-eight black balls, which figure, it was said, would have been increased to eighty had his proposer and seconder attended the election. It should be added that the name of the candidate in question had been submitted for election at the instigation of a highly important personage whose suggestions it was impossible to ignore.

A prominent figure at the Squadron from about 1834 to 1882 was the late Mr. George Bentinck, well known as Big Ben. Mr. Bentinck was very bluff and outspoken, and when in Parliament he once administered a violent lecture to both front benches, shaking his finger at the distinguished offenders who sat on both, and saying: "You know

you have all ratted; the only difference between you is that some of you have ratted twice."

He was no fair-weather yachtsman, and had the greatest contempt for people who did not live on board their vessels, who employed captains or sailing-masters, and who confined their yachting to the safe waters of the Solent. He had no notion, as he said, of a Cowes captain who always wanted to be ashore with his wife, so he commanded his own ships with the strictest discipline, and with the thorough respect of his crew. When in harbour, his first officer always knocked at his cabin door and reported eight bells. "Are the boats up?" was Mr. Bentinck's inquiry. "Yes, sir." "Very well, make it so;" and after that hour there was no going ashore for anybody. He was always delighted to take friends on a sea-voyage, but could never be induced to give any particulars as to where bound or the probable length of the cruise, and very much resented an inquiry on either point. People, accordingly, who accompanied him always settled their affairs for a reasonable period, not knowing when they would return. One of Mr. Bentinck's trips from Cowes to Gibraltar took forty-two days owing to bad weather, and on another voyage he declared that his yacht, the *Dream*, once shipped twenty tons of water in the Baltic. A somewhat unflattering caricature of Mr. Bentinck is preserved in the club-house at Cowes.

Another well-known member of the Squadron was Lord Cardigan, of Balaclava fame, who exhibited considerable eccentricity as a yachtsman.

Whilst out sailing one day, his skipper said : “ Will you take the helm, my lord ? ” “ No, thank you,” was the reply ; “ I never take anything between meals.” Lord Cardigan was certainly not much of a sailor, and, according to tradition, was accustomed to appear in a costume which included military spurs. He was also, according to all accounts, a man of somewhat unconciliatory temper, thoroughly imbued with a high sense of the importance of his great social position. He was born in the closing years of the eighteenth century, and was at strife with most of his acquaintance throughout his career of seventy-one years. He was very late in choosing the army as a profession, as he entered the service in 1824, at the age of twenty-seven, and by 1830 was a Lieutenant-Colonel, promotion being easy for a rich nobleman in the days of purchase.

Whilst the Royal Yacht Squadron at Cowes occupies a unique position as the chief yachting club and authority in the United Kingdom, it cannot boast a history dating back as far as an Irish yacht club—the “ Royal Cork ”—which traces its origin from a very ancient yachting club existing at Cork as far back as 1720. This would seem to have been a highly convivial institution, for one of the rules ran : “ Resolved that no admiral do bring more than two dozen of wine to his treat, for it has always been deemed a breach of the ancient rules and constitution of the club, except when my lords the judges are invited.”

At that date the rules and constitutions were described as being ancient, and some of the customs connected with the club (curious records

of which are in the possession of the Royal Cork Yacht Club) were picturesque and curious.

Once a year the "Water Club" took part in a ceremony, something like that performed by the Doge of Venice, when he was wedded to the Adriatic. A contemporary writer thus describes this function: "A set of worthy gentlemen, who have formed themselves into a body which they call the 'Water Club,' proceed a few leagues out to sea once a year in a number of small vessels, which for painting and gilding exceed the King's yacht at Greenwich and Deptford. Their admiral, who is elected annually, and hoists his flag on board his little vessel, leads the van and receives the honours of the flag. The rest of the fleet fall in their proper stations, and keep their line in the same manner as the King's ships. This fleet is attended with a prodigious number of boats with their colours flying, drums beating, and trumpets sounding, which forms one of the most agreeable and splendid sights your lordship can conceive."

The rules of this club dealt largely with conviviality. Rule XIV, for instance, laid down "that such members of the club as talk of sailing after dinner be fined a bumper."

In 1737 it was ordered "that for the future, unless the company exceed the number of fifteen, no man be allowed more than one bottle to his share and a peremptory."

The Royal Thames Yacht Club springs from the Cumberland Society which was formed of members who had sailed for the Duke of Cumberland's Cup. His Grace himself was wont to present this cup to

the winner at a function of considerable solemnity. The boats of the society were all anchored in line, flying the white flag with the St. George's cross. The captains waited in skiffs, and only boarded their boats when the Duke appeared in his gilded barge and proceeded to the boat of the Commodore of the fleet. The victorious captain was then summoned to that vessel and introduced to the Duke, who filled the cup with claret and drank the health of the winner, to whom he thereupon presented the cup. The winner then pledged the health of His Royal Highness and his Duchess, and the whole squadron sailed to Mr. Smith's tea-gardens at the Surrey end of Vauxhall Bridge, then a pleasant rural spot.

The owner of the gardens in question, Mr. Smith, seems to have held the post of Commodore in the society during the first five years of its incorporation, and a year or two later his establishment took the name of the society's patron, and was thenceforward known as Cumberland Gardens.

It was the rule, after the annual dinner, for members to adjourn to Vauxhall, close by, where they finished a jovial evening.

At the present day there exist a multitude of other clubs, but scarcely any of them come within the scope of this volume—which the writer hopes may prove not unwelcome both as a record of interesting club possessions and as a modest contribution to the history of English social life.

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